

Job Description

Title	Conservation Officer (Scottish Borders) <i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels – Developing Community Action</i>
Based	Sekirk, Scottish Borders
Dept/Region	Conservation
Line Manager	SSRS-DCA Project Manager

Overall Purpose of the Job

Lead on the implementation in the Scottish Borders of the *Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - Developing Community Action* (SSRS-DCA) project:

- to protect red squirrels in priority landscapes in the Scottish Borders from replacement by grey squirrels and from Squirrelpox disease.
- to galvanise and support community volunteer networks and land owners to engage actively in red squirrel protection and monitoring and inspire people to value their local red squirrels, other wildlife and the natural environment.

Main Duties

Public Engagement

1. Work closely with the Scottish Borders Community Engagement Officer to deliver a programme to encourage and support of networks of community groups and land owners actively engaged in red squirrel protection and monitoring work in priority areas for red squirrel conservation in the Scottish Borders.
2. Provide talks, guided walks and training workshops and engage in events to support active involvement of volunteers working to carry out practical red squirrel conservation in co-operation with SSRS and sharing their knowledge and skills with others.
3. Liaising with the Scottish Borders Community Engagement Officer deliver publicity to promote understanding among the wider community of red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel population management and to encourage the recording and reporting of squirrel sightings.
4. Contribute to updates for the SSRS website and the SSRS Facebook page.
5. Draft articles / press releases and liaise with the media to promote the project, in collaboration with the Scottish Borders Community Engagement Officer and the Scottish Borders Communications & Engagement Officer.

Grey Squirrel Control

6. Oversee and plan the grey squirrel control work in the Scottish Borders, supporting the current local networks in the Scottish Borders to maintain cohesive grey squirrel control in priority areas for red squirrel conservation in the region in accordance with the SSRS-DCA project plan.
7. Line manage and support 2 full-time Grey Squirrel Officers and seasonal SSRS staff working on the National Forest Estate to maintain effective grey squirrel control networks in the priority areas.
8. With the help of Grey Squirrel Officers, recruit land owners/ managers in critical gaps in the networks to access Scottish Rural Development Programme/Forestry Grant Scheme funding contracts for grey squirrel control to benefit red squirrels and support them to manage their contracts and report their trapping figures.
9. With the help of Grey Squirrel Officers, co-ordinate a project trap-loan scheme for land managers and volunteers to carry out grey squirrel control in co-ordinated control networks in Scottish Borders priority areas; support recipients to report control effort and catch to the Project.

Job Description

10. In collaboration with the Scottish Borders Community Engagement Officer, organise and deliver grey squirrel control training workshops for landowners and volunteers.

Surveying and Monitoring

11. Working closely with the SSRS Conservation Officer South West and the SSRS Community Engagement Officers, help to organise and deliver annual Spring presence/absence surveys to the existing protocol across the Scottish Borders.
12. Organise and deliver survey training via training workshops and face-to-face mentoring.
13. Organise squirrel-hair identification training day for interested volunteers to assist the delivery of the Spring tetrad surveys.
14. Carry out a small annual sample of autumn squirrel-food abundance surveys.
15. Co-ordinate maps and statistics and report on survey results for the region, volunteer engagement, trapping effort and catch and other key information
16. Promote the recording of squirrel distribution records in the Scottish Borders; check and verify Scottish Borders records reported on the SSRS online squirrel reporting page.

Reporting

17. Ensure collection and submission of high quality records on trapping effort and control totals, survey results, landowner co-operation, squirrel distributions and other key information and report these quarterly to the SSRS-DCA Data Officer.
18. Contribute to the development of science-based recommendations on the intensity and location of grey squirrel control effort needed to protect red squirrels within priority areas for red squirrel conservation.

Strategy, Organisation & Sustainability

19. Maintain strong partnership working with project partners and all local stakeholders to deliver the priorities outlined in the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - DCA project plan.
20. Liaise with Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels Conservation Officers across Scotland, the Scottish Squirrel Group and other national stakeholders to deliver a Scotland-wide red squirrel conservation strategy.
21. Liaise with squirrel conservation projects in North England to support effective cross-border control and monitoring of squirrel populations.

Key Internal & External Contacts

- SSRS-DCA Project staff, volunteers and stakeholders
- SSRS-DCA Data Officer, SWT Volunteering Development Officer
- Land owners/managers, local community red squirrel protection networks, volunteers and individuals
- Scottish Rural Development Programme regional Case Officers
- South Scotland regional project advisory group, consisting of Borders Squirrel Management Group, Red Alert South West Scotland, northern England squirrel projects, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Southern Upland Partnership and Buccleuch Estates,
- Wider stakeholders including a variety of local community interest groups, community councils, local authorities.

Job Description

Personal Specification

Qualifications, Training, Knowledge and Experience:	
Essential Qualifications:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree or equivalent vocational qualification in ecology, biology, geography, countryside management or related discipline	
Specific Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum two years previous experience in a relevant field and proven ecological field skills• Experience in recruiting, motivating, training and supporting volunteer groups and individuals to undertake active conservation work• Experience in engaging the wider public in conservation issues• Experience of project development and implementation• Experience of working with countryside rangers, landowners, estate staff and gamekeepers or similar	
Advantageous:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An aptitude for collating varied datasets with the drive and focus to see that project targets on data collection are met.• Staff management experience• Experience of working with mapping software• Working experience of social media• Experience in PR and working with the media• Knowledge of forestry/woodland management• Knowledge of current legislation relating to mammals.• Knowledge of the Scottish Borders area	
Special Competencies:	
Skills and Abilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working knowledge of wildlife ecology and conservation, especially mammal population management• Excellent interpersonal skills; ability to communicate with the public, staff and volunteers, colleagues and stakeholders, landowners, gamekeepers and estate staff and foresters.• Highly motivated and able to motivate others• Good organisational and reporting skills• Ability to work on own initiative and manage own time-table with minimal supervision• Full, clean driving licence.• Some out of normal hours working will be required• Competent and experience in using Microsoft Excel.	
Date	24 January 2018
Author	Mel Tonkin
Position	Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels Project Manager