



Red Squirrel

Sciurus vulgaris

Quick facts

Order Rodentia

Conservation status

GB *Endangered*

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England *Endangered*

Scotland *Near threatened*

Wales *Endangered*

Global *Least concern*

GB trend *Declining*

Size 18 - 20 cm, tail about 17.5 cm

Weight up to 350 g

Life span up to 6 years in the wild



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The red squirrel has variable colouration, from bright ginger to black. They grow ear tufts in winter, and the tail bleaches to white by summer in some individuals. Isolated populations in England and Wales; widespread but contracting in Scotland and Ireland.

Habitat

Conifer and broadleaf woodland.

Behaviour

Active during the day. Constructs drey (nest) close to tree trunk or in hole in tree, lined with hair, moss, dried grass. Spends about 3/4 of active time above ground in trees and shrubs.

Diet & Feeding

Tree seeds, especially hazel and conifer. Tree flowers, shoots, fungi. Often suffers periods of food shortage, especially during July.

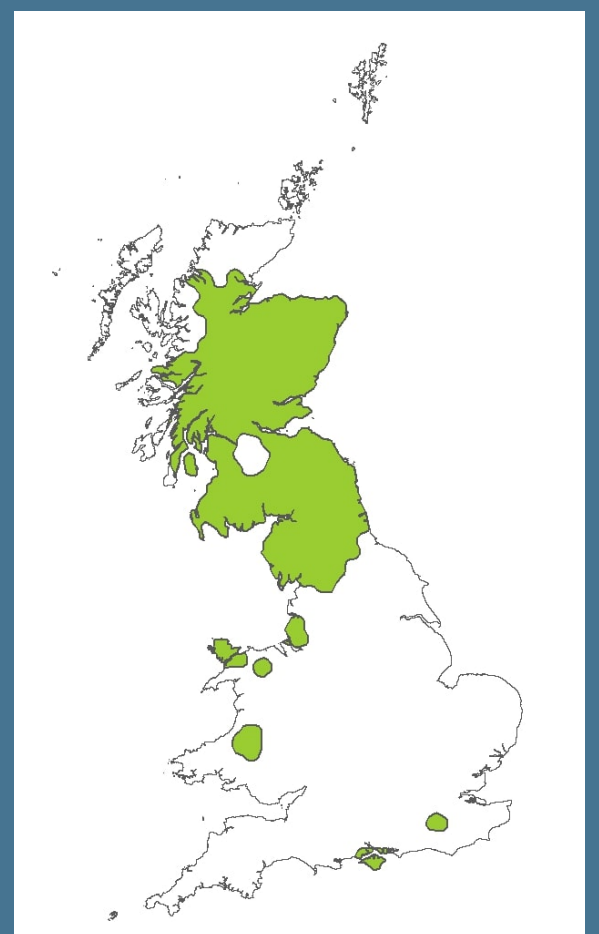
Reproduction

Breeding begins mid-winter and continues through summer as weather and food availability allows. 1 or 2 litters a year of 2 - 3 young are born. Several males may chase a female. During these chases, squirrels make spectacular leaps through the canopy and spiral up and down tree trunks.

Conservation & Threats

Protected by law and may not be trapped, killed, kept, or have dreys disturbed except under licence. Main threats are from grey squirrel introduced in early 20th century; the grey squirrel has contributed to this decline through disease transmission and indirect competition. The only certain way to sustain red squirrel populations is by excluding grey squirrels.

Range



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