

Second dispersal peak

This is the time of year when the second brood of kittens are dispersing. This inevitably leads to an increase in road deaths. The early mortality of red squirrels is high and only the fittest live to see their first birthday. If you see a dead squirrel don't forget to let me know.

Garden feeding

Please feed squirrels in your garden a healthy diet. Peanuts (not actually nuts) are not good for them so please give hazelnuts, walnuts, pine nuts and fruit. They also like an apple, sweetcorn, grapes or carrot, all healthier than peanuts.

This is the time of year they should be out gathering natural food. If you have missed them coming into garden, that is probably why. They are also getting their eartufts and winter coats now.



Squirrels in the roof

Occasionally I'm asked what to do about a red squirrel in a roof. So far, any squirrel nesting in a roof has not caused any damage, they do not nibble wires for instance. They move on to a new home periodically, so will not be there for years.

It is illegal to evict them, so just wait patiently until they leave and then fill in any holes that give access to the roof. On the other hand, you might feel privileged to have them as lodgers!

Friend of the red squirrel

Most of you receive this bulletin because you are already a 'Friend' or a volunteer. Volunteers and current 'Friends' are entitled to use our private hide. There are documents to sign before use, so please contact me for details. It will take a few weeks to get your card to you, with entry door number on, so please don't say 'I'm coming over tomorrow and want to visit the hide'.

Christmas is coming and a Friend of the red squirrel pack makes a good present. As well as a certificate and newsletter, a book or DVD is included in the pack. Details are on the website: www.wightsquirrels.co.uk

Tufty

Those of you who visited our shop in Ryde (now closed) you will remember the giant squirrel Tufty. Local Ryde resident, Bernie, kindly made him for us and recently he has been out on loan to film company TBMD. I'm hoping they managed to get shots of the 'real thing' as well.



Tufty with Paul McCathie of Goodleaf Tree Climbing

Online auctions

The money raised at the last online auction is going towards cameras for monitoring, starting spring 2021. The next auction includes items donated by film company TBMD. You will find auction details on our Facebook page: @wightsquirrelproject

Corridors



Corridors are important for all wildlife but especially for arboreal species such as red squirrels who need grown hedges and hangers. They are essentially highways between woodland. When I started in 1991, corridor links were poor but happily much better now.

I've been walking the island looking at these squirrel highways and it's easy to see how they disperse into, what you would think, are the most unlikely places to find a squirrel. By tracking from tree to tree—as a squirrel would—you can see how they got there.

Red squirrels will cross open ground if they have to but are obviously more vulnerable to predation, making these leafy highways all the more important.

Christmas cards

Our Christmas cards are available via online shop, ASK. They are sent out by the firm and we get a good commission on them, so please support us. The link is:

<https://www.fluidic.co.uk/c/6042/wight-squirrel-project>

Helen