

RED SQUIRREL - SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Red Squirrels and their dreys are protected under Schedules 5, 6 & 7 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (the Order). It is an offence to disturb these animals or obstruct access to their place of refuge, or destroy or damage anything which conceals or protects their place of refuge.

To ensure your development proposals comply with the Order, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has asked you to carry out an appropriate Red Squirrel survey. You should follow these guidelines:

- The surveyor contracted to undertake this work must have relevant experience which is deemed acceptable to the Department, for example an ecological consultant with experience of, and/or qualifications in, mammal surveying.
- At least 4 surveys over a 2 week period to include date and time of the surveys and the qualifications of the surveyor should be included in the survey report. Squirrels are unlikely to be active in heavy rain, strong winds or very cold conditions so if weather is unsuitable survey should be postponed.
- Surveys should be carried out well in advance of any planned construction works.
- The site and surrounding area should be surveyed to identify the exact location(s) of drey(s).
- The survey should establish whether or not Red Squirrels have established drey(s) or use the area for foraging. All evidence of use by Red Squirrels found, for example sightings and a hair tube survey should be included.
- The information should be presented in a written report and must include large scale maps, at 1:500 scale. If the proposal is an application for full planning permission, the locations of the drey(s) should be shown on the block plan.
- If necessary, the report should recommend the most appropriate ways in which the Red Squirrels can be protected during the construction works, for example, a change to the layout to protect the tree(s) that drey(s) are located.
- In the event that the planning application goes to appeal or public inquiry, the consultant contracted may be required to appear and/or give evidence.
- For more information, the UK Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation – Action Plan is available from NIEA website <http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk>
- For information on Red Squirrels and Development a booklet “Working with Wildlife Site Guide” produced by CIRIA can be obtained from www.ciria.org