

## Red Squirrel Surveys NIEA Specific Requirements

Red squirrels and their dreys are protected under Article 10 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended) under which it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5 of this Order, which includes the red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly: damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which red squirrels use for shelter or protection; damage or destroy anything which conceals or protects any such structure; disturb a red squirrel while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

To ensure your development proposals comply with the Wildlife Order, The 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 must be carried out over a 2 week period. Squirrels are unlikely to be active in heavy rain, strong winds or very cold conditions, so if weather is unsuitable surveys should be postponed.
- The date and time of the surveys and the qualifications of the surveyor must be included in the survey report.
- Surveys must be carried out within one year of submission to the Department.
- The survey should establish whether or not red squirrels have established dreys or use the area for foraging. The site and surrounding area should be covered.
- The information must be presented in a written report and include large scale maps. The exact location(s) of any drey(s) found must be shown. All evidence of red squirrels found, for example sightings and hair tube surveys, must be included. If the proposal is an application for full planning permission the location(s) of the drey(s) should also be shown on the block plan.
- If necessary, the report should recommend the most appropriate ways in which red squirrels can be protected from adverse impacts caused by the development (for example, a change to the layout to protect trees and dreys). Mitigation measures should cover all phases of the development - before, during and after construction.
- In the event that the planning application goes to appeal or public inquiry the person(s) contracted to carry out survey work may be required to appear at, or give evidence to, the inquiry.

**NIEA reserve the right to determine whether the survey is adequate or when additional information is required.**

For more guidance and information please refer to the following publications and websites:

**UK Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation Action Plan**

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/foi/recent-releases/publications-details.htm?docid=1852>

**The Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum**

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/northern\\_ireland\\_squirrel\\_forum.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/northern_ireland_squirrel_forum.htm)

**NIEA Development Management web page**

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/land-home/plan/advice\\_and\\_information.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/land-home/plan/advice_and_information.htm)

**Wildlife Management and Licensing web page**

[http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife\\_management\\_and\\_licensing.htm](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/biodiversity/wildlife_management_and_licensing.htm)