



Scottish Wildlife Trust

Job Description



	North East Eradication Lead <i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels – Transforming Nature Project</i>
Part-time or Full-time	Full time (35 hours/week); Fixed-term until 31 March 2026
Based	Inverdee House, Torry, Aberdeen, with anticipated flexible working throughout the region
Dept/Region	Conservation
Line Manager	<i>Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels Programme Manager</i>

Our Mission

For over 50 years, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has worked with its members, partners and supporters in pursuit of its vision of healthy, resilient ecosystems across Scotland's land and seas. We are proud to have the support of over 42,000 members, 1,000 volunteers and 23 local (volunteer led) groups.

The Trust successfully champions the cause of wildlife through policy and campaigning work, demonstrates best practice through practical conservation and innovative partnerships, and inspires people to take positive action through its education and engagement activities. The Trust manages a network of 120 wildlife reserves across Scotland and is a member of the UK-wide Wildlife Trusts movement.

Our Values

- We are pioneers
- We are always learning
- We act with integrity
- We are evidence-based
- We are impact focussed
- We are collaborative

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - Transition

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) is a project to deliver the essential protection measures required to secure the long-term future of red squirrels in Scotland and to ensure that systems are put in place to continue the delivery of these measures over the long term by working with other agencies with a stake in native species conservation and invasive non-native species management.

SSRS focuses upon one of our most charismatic and well-loved mammals – the red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). Once widespread, red squirrels have undergone a catastrophic population decline primarily due to competition from the non-native invasive, American grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). SSRS was formed to reverse this decline and create the conditions for this mammal to thrive in future, working with communities of volunteers and land managers, empowering them to take ownership of their role in its conservation.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

North East Eradication Scientific Lead

Overall Purpose of the Role

The North East Eradication Scientific Lead heads the delivery of the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels North East eradication effort in accordance with the SSRS project plan.

Primary responsibilities include the design, coordination, planning, and oversight of efforts to achieve complete eradication of grey squirrels from the region and prevent new incursion from the central lowlands, coordination of the development and implementation of novel detection, removal, and analysis methods, and line management of SSRS Aberdeen team members.

Main Tasks

Strategic planning and partnerships

1. Lead on the delivery of the strategic control of grey squirrels in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to secure red squirrel conservation objectives, including:
 - a. Continued development and implementation of an SSRS eradication plan and operational delivery strategy
 - b. Identification and development of novel low-density detection and removal methods
 - c. Coordination of necessary evaluation and monitoring research to inform delivery strategy
2. Collaborate with scientific partners and INNS experts on the development of a coordinated scientifically robust long-term monitoring and rapid response scheme to detect and rapidly remove remnant or resurgent grey squirrel enclaves *once eradication has been achieved*.
3. Liaise with RZSS Wild Genes Lab to undertake grey squirrel genetic analysis work to identify individuals, estimate population size, and regularly appraise methods of detection and removal to inform eradication efforts.
4. Maintain strong partnership working with project partners and all local stakeholders to deliver the priorities outlined in the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project plan and the Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation.
5. Organise regular meetings of the SSRS North East Eradication advisory group.

Operational Implementation

Grey Squirrel Control

1. Line manage and support a diverse team of two Eradication Officers and one Community Engagement Officer to support and co-ordinate their activities to deliver eradication of Aberdeen's grey squirrel population. Support for additional seasonal student monitoring officer(s) may also be required.
2. Work closely with the SSRS Highland Line Conservation Lead and Mearns Monitoring & Control Officer to ensure strategic monitoring to prevent further spread north of the mainland UK population of grey squirrels.
3. Organise land access permission for grey squirrel monitoring and control work from landowners and managers (public and private), including obtaining written permissions, securing continued cooperation, and liaising with Forestry and Land Scotland for access to National Forest Estates.
4. Collaborate with eradication staff to continue a process of innovation and improvement in trapping techniques in the Aberdeen area, working towards maximising efficacy to achieve eradication of grey squirrels in North East Scotland.
5. Oversee feeder and trap-loan schemes to assist householders and land managers to carry out grey squirrel control in an integrated control network in North East Scotland, organising training where necessary and encouraging further household uptake of the scheme.

Surveying and Monitoring

6. Collaborate closely with the NE Eradication team members to develop and deploy novel grey squirrel detection methods necessary to achieve eradication and resolve issues of trap shy grey squirrels and red squirrels trap blocking around the city.
7. Oversee and support efforts to expand current Rapid Response Monitoring, using feeder-boxes, trail

cameras and remote trap-monitors and support staff to identify squirrel hair samples and enter survey data into the SSRS online reporting Hub.

8. Coordinate closely with academic partners (SRuC and University of Aberdeen) to support a Student Monitoring Officer placement opportunity to carry out annual surveying in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.
9. Work closely with the NE SSRS team members and relevant contractors and stakeholders, to design and implement a programme of responsive grey squirrel presence surveying via detection dog and develop a programme for later systematic surveying once a point of zero grey squirrel detections has been reached.
10. Promote the recording of squirrel distribution records in North East Scotland; check and verify records reported on the SSRS online squirrel reporting page and/or oversee staff or volunteer checking and verification of the sightings records.

Reporting

11. Ensure collection, maintenance, and submission of high-quality records on monitoring, survey, and trapping effort the SSRS Hub (database) to agreed SSRS project standards, including records of staff, householder, and volunteer participation and trapping records.
12. Coordinate efforts to collect and share necessary grey squirrel hair and tissue samples for analysis by RZSS WildGenes Lab, and facilitate the exchange of data and findings in accordance with project agreements and relevant plans.
13. Ensure the timely completion of all regional reporting requirements according to organisational and project requirements.
14. Work with the SSRS Programme Manager and SSRS Data Officer to monitor and evaluate regional progress and adapt operational priorities and approaches as needed.
15. Collect, maintain and report the information required for reporting on project performance to the Trust, funders and partners, including any reporting specific to the NE regional efforts and attend quarterly funder update meetings.

Community Engagement

16. Lead on the provision of appropriate outreach and training to volunteers and external partners in relevant grey squirrel monitoring and detection methods to institutionalise expertise for post-eradication monitoring.
17. Work closely with SSRS Communications Officer and NE Community Outreach Officer to liaise with the press, media, and partners to promote understanding among the wider community of red squirrel conservation, grey squirrel control, and eradication, and to encourage the recording and reporting of squirrel sightings, in collaboration with the SSRS Communications Officer.

Key Contacts

- SSRS Project staff, namely SSRS North East Eradication Officers and Community Outreach Officer, SSRS Programme Manager, SSRS Communications Officer, SSRS Data Officer, SSRS Highland Conservation Lead, SSRS Mearns Control & Monitoring Officer
- SSRS project partners, and stakeholders including Aberdeen City Council, RZSS WildGenes Lab, Forestry & Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, Aberdeenshire Council, University of Aberdeen, Scottish Rural College (SRuC), and Scottish Land & Estates
- SSRS volunteers, landowners / managers, rangers, foresters and woodland managers, gamekeepers, and householders

Qualifications, Experience (essential/desirable)

Essential Qualifications:

- Research degree in ecology, biology, invasive species, countryside management or related discipline, or equivalent professional experience

Specific Experience:

- Minimum two years previous experience in a relevant field and proven experience of wildlife ecology and conservation, especially mammal population management or invasive non-native mammal control and eradication.
- Leadership and staff management experience.
- Proven project development and management experience.
- Experience of collecting, maintaining and reporting standardised ecological data.
- Experience of standardised surveys and understanding of scientific method.
- Experience in recruiting, motivating and supporting volunteers to undertake active conservation work.

Desirable:

- PhD degree in ecology, biology, invasive species or related discipline, or equivalent
- Knowledge of Aberdeen and surrounding area.
- Knowledge of relevant research and scientific analytical methods.
- Experience in mapping software.
- Experience in PR and working with the media.
- Good writing and reporting skills.

Key competencies	Essential	Desirable
Technology and knowledge (IT)	Competent and experienced with the range of Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Outlook, Word, Teams). Competent in using online reporting platforms to record standard data and able to enter data accurately.	Awareness and knowledge of General Data Protection Regulations.
Organisation and planning	Strategic thinking coupled with excellent organisation	Strong analytical skills and problem solving
Communication (writing/spoken)	Good communication skills (both written and verbal); comfortable talking to a wide range of people including landowners and volunteers.	
Commitment to organisational culture, values and vision		A strong personal commitment to wildlife conservation.
Teamwork	Motivation to work on own initiative and to motivate others.	

Additional Requirements	Essential	Desirable	Not applicable
Right to work in the UK	X		
Full Driving Licence	X		
Willingness to work occasional evenings or weekends	X		
Protection of Vulnerable Groups membership			X
First Aid Certificate		X	

Author	Nicole Still	Position	SSRS Programme Manager	Date	October 2024
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Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is a partnership project led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and supported by project partners and by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot.

