

# GLENS RED SQUIRREL GROUP



Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017



[glensredsquirrelgroup.com](http://glensredsquirrelgroup.com)



## Chairman's Report

Dear Members

Where has this year gone? It feels like no time at all since I last sat down to do my report last year and for myself personally, Kelly and I have since been blessed with Ben now eleven months, so this year has been truly a blink, and I have seen the true value of time and how quickly it goes.

I now step down from my third year as chair and I offer the next chair all my help and assistance as they take their position and will continue to carry on my active role within the Group as a Red Squirrel Ranger and carry on some of the roles that I have taken on outside the role of chair to assist with the Groups work.

I have enjoyed my time as chair throughout the three years. There were some trying issues over the time, but many more enjoyable moments and achievements, like watching projects take shape and achieving their full potential and value. Such as the Hide in Cregagh Wood, being part of the first Translocation of Red Squirrels in N. Ireland, knowing that there are Glens Red Squirrels living and breeding happily in Killkeel doing their bit for Red Squirrel Conservation. Seeing members within the GRSG committee taking on tasks and roles to assist the Group and the work we do in the Glens to protect our local native Red Squirrels.

The GRSG have yet again worked endlessly throughout the year to help our local Red Squirrels. We have seen our Reds thrive and we have been out and about making sure that everyone was aware of what we are doing. There has been much media cover this year about funding and projects benefiting from it across the UK and N. Ireland, this unfortunately caused misconceptions about works and funding we the GRSG were getting. Thankfully, locally these misconceptions were explained and the larger project corrected this to prevent further confusion.

We, like all charities, are always looking for funding and assistance. This year we were not successful with the Challenge Fund for the delivery of a Park Project for the Cottage Wood. This was the first time we weren't selected. This was a loss for the group and would have enabled a large scale habitat enhancement for the Cottage Wood in Cushendall, linking into education of our natural environment. We were lucky to be successful with a few smaller grants that helped us get much needed equipment and partnered with other groups in the Glens to get equipment that will help us all locally. A big thanks to those groups who approached us and enabled us to get benefit from these grants. I hope over the next few years we can partner and link with other groups to assist the work we all do.

This year we have had no large scale projects but we made up for it with works carried out on the ground by individual active members. There has been much work that can't be noted and work that has created ways to support us much easier, like our PayPal on the website getting donations from many who follow us on our Facebook and website. This will greatly help the group as we carry on with what we do.

We have suffered the loss of a few traps and a camera trap, this year, putting additional pressure on what resources we do have, sadly this is something we have experienced before and will do so again. We can only hope that the actions we are taking to prevent this will have an impact and reduce our losses in the future.

As Chair, I just want to thank all of the GRSG committee for their support and assistance and to thank all those active members working hard to support the work of the Glens Red Squirrel Group and the conservation of Red Squirrels here in the Glens.

Daniel McAfee, *Chair of the Glens Red Squirrel Group.*

## **Grey Squirrel control record for 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 - 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Total 29

This year we have been very low in Grey Squirrel dispatches and there are several reasons for this. The first and most important is that we had a decrease in Grey Squirrel sightings within the Glens area. 90% of our dispatches took place in historical trap sites that we have been working in over the years. These are not reported as sightings. Rangers and members work in these sites and are still working there. All reports we received were looked into as best as our active members and Rangers can. In several sightings we had about Greys, the Grey was only seen once and did not return to the site.

In 2015/2016 the Groups Grey Squirrel control record of 152 Greys included a project in the Ballygally area carried out by our members at the time. This was an intense trapping program to remove a large concentration of Greys Squirrels. The GRSG's activity in the area has finished. A local group have taken on the continuing Grey Control in partnership with additional biodiversity work.

There has also been a reduction in active members - carrying out Grey Squirrel control on behalf of the group. This issue has not had a direct impact on the number of Greys the group was able to dispatch. It did have an impact on the time and effort of other activities, i.e. Carrying out the practical work, feed sites, monitoring sites, talks, and walks. Those who are trapping are feeding their information back to Daniel McAfee and all dispatches are logged in group records and to CEDaR.

The information recorded is:-

DATE

Grid reference.

Sex of the animal

Weight

Who dispatched

Date recorded to CEDaR.

If the dispatcher provides a photo this it is also logged with the CEDaR report as proof.

Each dispatch is given a GRSG number and logged to CEDaR with this number. Since the dispatching recording started 02-04-11 to 20-04-17 the group have official recorded 466 Grey Squirrels across the Glens.

CEDaR

We have been officially recording with CEDaR for 2 years 7months.

Pine Marten            18

Red Squirrel        367  
Grey Squirrel     206

### Pox in the Glens

The Group were informed on the 9-8-2017 of an outbreak of Squirrel Pox in the Glenarm Estate.

All feeders were removed from Glenarm Forest that evening. Scatter feed sites were then established in several parts of the forest on the 12-8-2017. 3 sites were selected and monitoring cameras set up. The cameras were checked once a week and feed scattered every 2-3 days. Notices were put up on the same date to inform walkers and forestry users why the feeders had been removed and what to do if they were to find sickly or dead Reds. Over the time of monitoring no sick or sickly Squirrels were seen at any of the 3 sites or at any of the other



scatter feed sites. We received no sighting of sick Squirrels from the forestry users. We had several



requests to reinstall the feeders as they were missed. We recorded much activity in the wood, 4 -6 Hedgehogs, up to 4 Pine Martens, Mice, Rats, Pheasants, 1 Fox and a lot of Red Squirrels. No Grey Squirrels or no Badgers were seen over the time.

It was decided on the 27-11-2016 to remove the monitoring cameras and install the 5 feeders again. 5 new feeders were installed and 5 new feeders were provided for changeover. Feeders were reported to be used 2 days after being installed. No sighting of sick Reds or Grey Squirrels have

been reported to date.

We will have to see what happens as in previous years pox can appear in Red populations in March April and May. As the weather heats up and Squirrels may suffer from more fleas and other pests.

## Squirrel Month Report 2016

We had a very busy and successful Red Squirrel week/month. This year, like last, we held a number of walks and events over the month of October to celebrate Squirrel week. GRSG feel that a week is just not long enough to highlight our native Red Squirrel and the work we are doing to protect and maintain them in the Glens. As a voluntary group, a week is also an issue for those who work, so events over all the weekends in October can be easier to arrange and attend for many.



This year saw GRSG have one of the most active Squirrel months to date. We had 16 activities through the month, we had:- 4 Walks, 1 school walk, 1 Quiz night, 1 feeder workshop, 3 Cregagh Wood Hide openings, 3 school visits and 1 info table event. Across the month at these events we reached 124 + people (Non- members) directly.

Our events were well attended this year with only one walk that had very wet weather. The walks took place in Ballycastle Forest, Glenarm Forest, The Cottage Wood, Cushendall and Cregagh Wood, Cushendun. These sites are Forestry Service and Causeway Coast and Glens sites and for many of those on the walks, it was their first time visiting that particular wood or forest. Many said it was great getting the chance of a guided walk and being shown what to look for when spotting Squirrels and other wildlife. We used Facebook and the local papers to advertise our events but found that most of those attending had been alerted to them by Facebook.

The Open Days of the Hide in Cregagh Wood were not as well attended as we would have hoped. The early start may have been an issue for many. The Rangers who manned the Hide did report that the Reds in the wood were seen but they had no interest in using the feeders that were in place, but this shows that the Red Squirrels in the wood were taking advantage of the bumper natural food supply that the wood was offering. The bird feeders in the Hide area offered those in the Hide with plenty of entertainment with the local Sparrow Hawk showing up a few times.

Our Quiz night was a great success and was a great night's fun for all. The quiz was held in the Laragh Lodge in Glenariff. Thanks to our quiz masters, Fern and Brendan Major, for a very entertaining night. We had several local business give prizes for the night and for our raffle. A big thanks for the continued support and to our group members who also donated prizes.

In partnership with the Antrim Glens Tourism Group we held the groups info table at the Ghost in the Glens Festival. We were able to hand out newsletters, colouring sheets to children, and to display our stuffed Red and Grey Squirrels along with videos from our observation sites. The festival attracts people from across the country and is growing year on year.

The GRSG's Facebook page was used to reach out to inform about what work and activities our group members and Red Squirrel Rangers were doing with feeding, observation sites, and posts about how the events we ran had went on the day. By using Facebook we were able to reach 14,579 views over 17 posts. This is a great way of getting the message out about the work we are doing in the Glens and local area to help our Red Squirrels.

The Group must thank all those who made this Squirrel month possible, it was a small number of very dedicated members, Thanks to our Squirrel Rangers, Daniel, Gerard and Committee Member Liz for guiding and assisting with the walks and Hide openings. Thanks to the groups PRO for getting our events the coverage in the local press, thanks to the local press for their continued support and willingness to print our events and news. Big thanks to our group members who organized and ran our Quiz night and to all those who gave prizes for our raffle and for prizes on the night. Our Secretary, Vince for keeping our membership informed and booking our events. Thanks to those members who attended events to help out or just to come along and enjoy the walks. To the two local Schools who approached us and asked us to be part of their teaching plans by leading walks or visits. St. Patricks and St. Bridgid PS and Ballycastle Integrated PS. Thanks to the Causeway Cost and Glens Council and the N.I. Forest Service for their support in all their sites across the Glens.

## Area Reports.

### Glenshesk

I look after four permanent monitoring sites in Glenshesk. I also have a further eight temporary monitoring sites running from Ballycastle up toward Glenmakeeran. These sites are used to locate Greys coming down from Ballypatrick Forest, going towards Glenshesk and Ballycastle. I have been very successful in trapping Greys within these sites. Thanks goes to the many Farmers and Landowners who allow us to access their ground, without their permission, we would have a Grey stronghold within the Ballycastle area.

Since the last AGM, the Reds that I look after have flourished and their numbers are increasing. With the work I am doing in Glenmakeeran, I hope to see Reds returning here within the next few years. Last year my resident Pine Martin pair in Glenshesk produced twins, which was very exciting. Unfortunately one of them was killed on the road, last summer.

The low point over the year was the fact that someone stole one of our Bushnell Camera Traps, totally destroying it in the process. The Camera had been attached to a tree with a secure cable lock and was used to monitor a feeder. Its location allowed us to watch out for any Greys coming into Glenshesk from the Army Side.

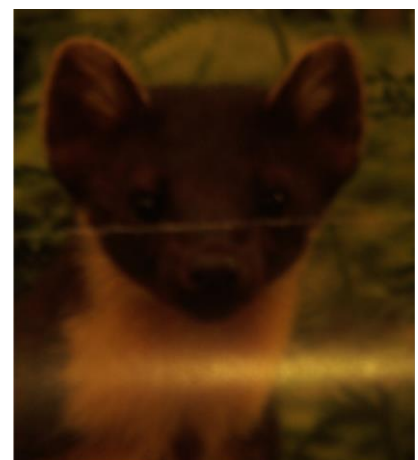
Gerard Mc Caughan, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger

### Glenarm Forest

The year 2016/17 will be highlighted/marred with the fact that we had to deal with an outbreak of a viral infection (parapox virus) affecting the Squirrels within the Glenarm Area, incidentally not within the Glenarm Forest area.

Routine action when an outbreak occurs is to alert the public, withdraw the feeding boxes, and introduce scatter feeding while monitoring the selected sites with field cameras. The sites were visited daily with food. We were fortunate and found no evidence during the monitoring period of any affected Squirrels. Our cameras however showed how diverse our Wildlife mammal section is within the Glenarm Forest area.

These Sightings were recorded and forwarded to CEDaR. The Controls were lifted and the feeding boxes returned. Daniel throughout this period travelled to Glenarm from Ballycastle... this should be noted and applauded. My workload is minimal looking after 5 feeders, but it gives me ample opportunity to engage with the visiting public, conversationally or through formal talks with walking groups. Subject to the approval of the group I would like to propose a move of the feeder sites and an increase in their numbers...there are huge gaps within the circuit of feeders. This accompanying Photograph is just there to adorn, a change from our usual Red Squirrel, and also allow us to ask the question 'Friend or Foe'.



Denis McBride, Active Member

## **Ballycastle Forest.**

Ballycastle Forest is a mix of mature conifer blocks and broad leaf planting between 15-20 years old. One of the first sites for a GRSG observation site in 2008 and with assistance from the CCGHT was one of 3 Squirrel Trails in the Glens alongside Ballypatrick and Glenariff.

There are 9 feeders within the forest as part of the Squirrel Trail and they are well used and situated on the main Ballycastle forest walk/ road way. This walk covers the low entry point to Ballycastle Forest, part of the Ballycastle railway line and then into the forestry loop to the forestry yard and down what is known locally as Donnelly's Lane, back to the low entrance. All the feeders are well used and well known by many of the walkers and users of the forest, who regularly inform us of Reds they have seen and if there are any issues with the feeders such as damage or lids having come off in bad weather. This year we have had an increase in the Squirrels eating of the damp proof hinge in one of the feed sites with has 3 feeders.

We have 2 Camera Traps in Ballycastle Forest one of these has only been in place over the last 6 months, as there had been a report of a Grey Squirrel at the first of 3 feeders in the forest. There has been no Greys seen at all in the site. We have had no sighting at any of the other feeders or at the fixed camera at the feeder at the big bend.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March we received a call about a dead Red Squirrel in the forest near to the big bend feeder. I was able to call out and pick up the Red and there was no visible cause of death. The Forestry Service and the NIEA were contacted and we were advised to freeze the Red and look out for dead Reds or changes in feeder usage. We had the camera in place and nothing over that week or to date has shown anything to worry about. A press release was put out and it was put on Facebook, highlighting the need for people to look out for sick or dead Reds in the forest. We have had no additional Reds found or reported.

The feeders in Ballycastle experience fluctuations in their usage but this corresponds with seasonal food abundances, with many of the feeders being used in the early morning. We still have our resident Pine Marten. It did disappear for 9 weeks but has returned to the feeder at the big bend. For the first time we have had a wood mouse start to use the feeder in all the time the feeder has been in place. This little mouse visits the feeder almost nightly, now. We haven't seen any deer this year, but this may be because the winter has been very mild, meaning the deer are staying at the upper part of the forest.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

## **Ballypatrick Forest.**

Large blocks of conifer planting with a small number of broad leaf trees but they were all self-seeded at this section of the forest.

Originally part of the first Squirrel Trail but due to works within the planting of thinning from the forestry and illegal felling, the Squirrel population in the area vanished or moved on. Feed was being wasted and prompted feeding to stop in this site at the car park.

Our observations sites within the forest are visited every 4-6 weeks and were found to be very active, with the activity slowly increased with more regular feeding. A camera was put in place about 2 weeks after the site has been proven to be showing activity. The camera shows Reds and no Greys have been found to be using the sites over the time of monitoring. Due to a high demand for the cameras they only stay on site for a week or two before being moved. The camera shows that there

was also a Pine Marten visiting the feed sites. Deer, Jay and a wide mix of small birds were also found on the sites, along with the wood mouse this year, there has been an increase in the number of rats that appear in the sites shortly after feeders are stocked. Rats have been one of the main users of one of the feed sites. This site was removed as tree felling was due and the trees have now been removed.

As part of the Red Squirrel United Projected present/ absence survey and following on from work done by Dave Tosh and supported/ assisted by group members, Ballypatrick was one of the selected woodlands. A feeder and camera were installed for a week to record if there are Red Squirrels, Grey Squirrels and Pine Martens. Sadly over the week no Squirrels or Pine Martens were seen. The only thing that found the feeder was a Great Tit. From our feed sites it takes about 2 weeks for the wild life to find any newly positioned feeders.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

### **Hanging Wood**

A mix of Oak, Hazel, Ash and Holly with no Conifer trees. The mixed site has a wide range of tree ages. It has a variety for wildlife and plant life set aside, not to be grazed, but from time to time live stock (sheep) will get into the site. The site has a large Badger set with up to 8 Badgers living in it.

This site was set up as a control site to impact on the number of Greys Squirrels that were making their way into Ballycastle Forest. The site had a number of Greys when it was first set up and no Red Squirrels, after a number of Greys had been removed, a set of Red Squirrels were found to visit the feeder.

Shortly after the Reds appeared a female Pine Marten was found to use the site and no Greys were seen, unfortunately the Pine Marten is not a regular visitor though it can come several times a week.

This year the site has been attended once every 2-3 weeks with refilling and checking the camera in place. The Red Squirrel activity has decreased to what it had been in the wood and there is no known reason for this. The resident Female Pine Marten had vanished for 7 months but as of April 1<sup>st</sup> a Pine Marten returned to the site. This was not the same Pine Marten that had normally been in the site as the last one only had one eye and this animal, two clear eye shines can be seen. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April a Grey Squirrel was seen on camera and as of yet only visits the site randomly. Traps are in place and the feeder and camera are being checked weekly. Trapping did take place over a week with no Squirrels trapped so it was discontinued until there is more regular Grey usage. Over the week of trapping the Pine Marten was visiting nightly.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

### **Joe Kelly's Wood**

A local land owner spotted a Grey Squirrel on his ground and allowed a feeder and camera to be installed in a large wooded Glen between Ballycastle Forest and the Hanging Wood site. The Glen is a "Y" shape with a river cutting through it. The trees are a mix of Oak, Ash, Hazel and Holly the trees are a mixed age with young trees coming up in the areas where the canopy is open to allow ground light.



A feeder and camera were set up and within two days it was found by one Red Squirrel and then two Reds. The Squirrels in the site had no problems with the feeder knowing how to use it from the offset. The use of this site links with the reduction in use in the Hanging Wood site.

The site has been in place for 14 months and no Greys Squirrels had found the feeder over this time the Reds usage of the site had dropped over the last 2 months and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April the feeder and the camera were removed. the camera had been experiencing problems such as locking on and freezing with the battery draining and then when it was checked, the LED screen has stopped working.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

### **Murlough Bay**

Mix planting in small blocks of Oak, Ash, Holly, Beech, Larch and Scot Pine, mostly along rock faces and sheltered coves.

After a reported sighting of a Grey Squirrel from a Coleraine wildlife recorder and then a second report the following day from an N.T. Ranger of having seen a Grey 3 weeks earlier, an observation site with feeder and camera was set up to try and attract any Squirrels in the area to the one location. After 2 week the Grey Squirrel found the feeder and within 2 days had worked out how to use it.

The Grey was trapped and dispatched on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The camera and feeder was left in place in case of a second Grey on site. A second Grey was seen on camera on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, trapped and dispatched on the 24<sup>th</sup> March.

The camera in this site is now privately owned and maintained. The site has a feeder but it is only a scatter feed site now. There has been a sighting of a Grey 3 weeks later but it has not found the feed site. To date there have been no Squirrels seen. Monitoring is still ongoing at this site and control will take place as and when needed.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

### **Drumavolly Road**

The Monitoring station on Drumavolly Road has been attended every 2-3 weeks between April 2016 and March 2017. For a period of some weeks through 2016, this quiet station site attracted some unwanted Human activity from workmen working in nearby fields. The camera was not touched, but the presence of Humans may have impacted the wildlife using the station and so I altered my visiting pattern in order not to draw attention to the camera etc.

Nonetheless, the camera has recorded various wildlife. Animal observations included numerous bird-life, Deer, and regular Pine Martin visits. Red Squirrels visit the station each week, but I have not noted any Greys to date, despite reports of their presence in nearby woods. Intermittent feeding is ongoing.

GRSG, Active Member.

### **Glenariff Report 2017**

Including feeders in members' gardens and properties throughout Glenariff, there is upwards of thirty five feeders that we know of. All are currently in use.

At all times we also have a number of mobile camera monitoring sites, which are periodically moved in a bid to determine just what is visiting where, and when. These have been very successful in recording a snapshot of what is going on at our sites. Of course one of the main reasons for these monitoring sites is to determine if any Greys have reached the Glen. Thankfully we have a network of members and non-members alike who undertake reporting and recording. It seems like there is constant chatter throughout the Glen as to what is going on in our Squirrel fraternity, and it really is priceless to our group. It's very noticeable when there is a report of a Grey it always leads to increased vigilance throughout, and we get that valuable feedback we badly need.

The Forest Park itself is currently home to a healthy population of Reds. There are approx fourteen feeders at any given time in use and there's lots of activity at them. Anyone entering the forest by car has a great chance to spot Reds; of course it's a lot better on foot. Another hotspot where we get great feedback from is the Garden Area. Along with these feeders we also deploy the mobile monitoring sites, which we can set up and move around quite quickly. This enables us to get an overall picture of the activity, and to respond quickly within the forest if there is any reason to. Our cameras record 24/7, with night vision, so over time we have picked up a great glimpse of the wide range of wildlife that calls the forest their home. From a Stag to a Stoat (or Witterick, as it's known round here) and from a Hare to a Pheasant, we've seen lots. And of course, as you may be aware, we have recorded a Pine Marten in the area.

The large TV screens in the Tea House and in the Exhibition Centre, thanks to Glenariff Improvement Group and Kathleen Murray, show the live video from a feeder and very often you'll see families enthralled in this. It is a great asset and is enjoyed by everyone, it is also a great way to go back and view old footage.

Moving down the Glen from the forest on the Glenariff Road we are very lucky to have a network of feeder stations, largely thanks to the Crawford family. We get a great insight from the activity in this area and great feedback. At the Laragh Lodge we have another couple of feeders and also a few on the way in. Very recently there were five Squirrels spotted in this area at the same time. Then along the Glen Road and the Glassmullan Road we have feeders and monitoring sites, both in members' gardens and in established businesses, Barahooley Farm, Kilmore House and Glenhaven Holidays to mention a few.

The Live Feeder Camera has gone from strength to strength. There's rarely a dull moment. In the past we've had a landslide, we've recorded a one armed Squirrel, we've seen Squirrels and Pheasants squabble and on numerous occasions we have recorded very young Kits. This year the Kits were a little more grown than usual when they came on the scene, but of course fantastic to see. This year also saw one of our Rangers take a bit of a dive into the river at the nearby waterfall, (name withheld through sheer embarrassment)

With the Live Feeder Camera (incidentally the first in Northern Ireland of its kind) we get regular feedback from people who seem to be logged on to it quite a bit. Indeed when said Ranger fell in the river, there was an email into the group within minutes enquiring after his health. There are even messages to remind us to top up the feeders! How very dare they....



All in all, at the minute I think I can confidently say that things have never been better in Glenariff as far as Red Squirrel Conservation goes and it is without doubt down to our network of members, non-members, Rangers, businesses and the people who take time to lift the phone or email us with sightings and other information which is very valuable to the work we do.

And to you all, I say a big thank you!

Vince Segerdahl, Secretary and Glens Red Squirrel Ranger

### **Ballyeamon Barn, Cushendall (HQ)**

Ballyeamon Barn is a tourist hostel close to Glenariff Forest Park. We are lucky enough to have three Red Squirrels visiting the two feeders at the back of the barn. Last year we added a third feeder on a big Beech tree directly opposite the window of our guest apartment and our visitors love watching and photographing the Reds in action. Red Squirrels are such a draw for tourists these days

I put up some new bird feeders at the front of the house but of course our Reds are raiding them too! They are really acrobatic.

The Barn is just two miles from Cargan where Greys have been spotted so I know of the threat and I am very keen to encourage our Reds.

I am proud that the Glens Red Squirrel Group meets here regularly and that our studio is also used as a workshop space for making feeders.

Liz Weir, Committee Member.

## Glenmona Feed Site Playground

The site is still very active sadly due to demands on our active members and Red Squirrel Rangers, time, this site is only filled once or twice a month. This has not had an impact on the Red in the area as the National Trust Rangers have increased the feeding they do in and around the work shop. When the feeders are filled in the playground, the Reds are quick to take advantage of it. We have had several sightings from very impressed visitors to the area when they see the Reds at the feeders.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

## Cregagh Wood, Local Nature Reserve.

The GRSG first developed a Feeding and Observation site at Cregagh Wood in 2009. The wood itself is an excellent example of an old mixed woodland and provides a varied habitat that lends itself well to nature trails. This has now become a well-established part of the group's areas of work. In 2015, the then Moyle District Council took on the management of the wood as its first nature reserve. With changes in council, this then became the first Nature Reserve of the Causeway Coast and Glen's Council. The Hide was funded by the NGO Challenge Fund and has been a great asset for the woods with the GRSG using it and the Councils Biodiversity Officer running events at the Hide with a number of groups booked for use over the summer months.

The Group have been active with Grey Squirrel control in the wood from 2011 when the first Grey was seen at the fixed feed site. Over the years Grey Squirrel control has become an active and continuing part of the work that takes place in the wood.

This year has been no different in total there was a few sightings reported of Greys within the woods, the first being in December, and a Grey was found to be in the lower section of the woods but not regularly. The council were informed and monitoring cameras and feeders were put in place. The council enforced that there would be no shooting in Cregagh Woods. We had no problem with this, as the GRSG are not covered for shooting as part of our work.



The Hide site has 4 feeders. When the reported Grey was seen an additional 4 feeders and cameras were put in place to try and pinpoint the Greys location. Over this time the Grey had vanished for 6 weeks though we got a second report of the Grey in late February and that week we were able to pick it up on one of our Camera Traps. The Grey only visited one of the feeder sites for a few hours and didn't use the feeder. Over that week it found the feeder and over the next few weeks the Greys activity became more regular and traps were introduced to the site. The council were informed and we did a walk of the wood. Trapping took place and a Grey was removed. The monitoring site then recorded a second Grey the next week and there has been 3 Greys removed to date. Trapping is continuing in that site. At the start of April a Grey was seen at all 4 of the monitoring sites, after this Grey was removed, no Greys were seen at any sites. We have just received reports of at least one Grey moving around the woods, but it will be removed soon.

The Red population has continued to thrive and we are picking up Reds at all our feeders and monitoring sites and the nearby houses and farms are also seeing more Red activity. We were able to photograph one of this year's kits at the Hide site. The wood is rich in wildlife but we have not seen the Pine Marten that was recorded back in 2015. Sadly over this year there were worries about possible poisoning when cracked hens eggs were found in a number of parts of the wood. This activity puts all wildlife and dogs at risk. We hope the Pine Marten has not fallen victim to this careless behaviour.

While out in the woods carrying out feeding and trapping the Lesser Spotted Wood Pecker has been heard drumming and also calling. This will make a great and rare addition to the wood. We have yet to catch it on Camera Trap or camera.

Daniel McAfee, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Chairperson

### **Equipment Report.**

During the year we added to our Equipment List. We were able to buy some more equipment which we can use when we are having meetings or attending fairs. This was through a Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme funded by DAERA and administered by NACN. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff from NACN, especially Sandy Wilson, for all their help completing the application forms.

We have just heard that we have got a grant from the Honourable Irish Society. This will enable us to expand our equipment holding and get things that the group need.

Fern Major on behalf of "The Friends of Glenariff" asked us to partner them, when they applied for a grant and they were successful in their bid. We will received, 2 x TV screens, 2 Cameras 2 Camera cable locks, 2 SD card readers and we have access to a PA system, among other things.

A change in the Insurance by our Insurance Company has had a major effect on how we work. They have stopped providing insurance cover for Members using Ladders/steps while working on GRSG tasks. As members are not covered at present due to this, I recalled all of our ladders/steps for safety reasons. The Committee considered finding a workaround and after receiving advice from various sources, decided to remove the need for ladders in all GRSG work.

Gerard Mc Caughan, GRSG Red Squirrel Ranger and Equipment Caretaker.

## **Monthly Reports.**

### **APRIL**

#### ***18-4-16 Boxes were erected in Cregagh Wood***

Bird Boxes and Bat Boxes were erected in Cregagh Wood on the run up to the opening of the new Hide. The boxes are the last step to completing the full project. The Hide information panels are in place inside the Hide. The Project has been a great working partnership with the group and the Causeway Coast and Glens Council. Rachel Bain from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has expressed her willingness to work on a similar project next year if we are successful with an application and to work in the same manner with the Council.



### **22-4-16 1<sup>st</sup> Carnfunnock Scouts talk and feeder work shop**

A talk and feeder work shop was delivered by Group Chair and Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee. The talk was given to the Beavers and Cubs section of the Scouts, approx 25-30 children and Leaders. It was a very enjoyable evening with positive feedback from the Leaders. They were given colouring in sheets. The larger section of Scouts and Explorer Scouts took part in the construction of 15 feeders. They were given a brief talk about the work that the group does and the need to help protect our native Red Squirrels. They were shown the stuffed Squirrels and shown how to construct a feeder. Then they had to work in pairs to make up the flat packs they had been given.



### **24-4-16 Walk in Cregagh Wood**

A walk by Chair/Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee and Red Squirrel Ranger, Gerard Mc Caughan. Our group secretary, Vince also attended. We started the walk by visiting the Hide in Cregagh Wood and during our visit, two RSPB volunteers called in while visiting the wood to try and catch a glimpse of a Woodpecker that had been spotted that morning and reported on the RSPB website. Sadly no Squirrels appeared but lots of the small birds were on display. The RSPB volunteers left and we carried on with our walk. The weather was very good but we did not see any Squirrels at all in the wood on this occasion.

## **MAY**

### **1-5-16 Visitors from Switzerland**

Red Squirrel Ranger, Liz O'Connor delivered a walk in Glenariff with visitors from Switzerland, no Squirrels spotted apart from two that Liz herself spotted earlier in the garden area of the forest. A donation was given to the group.

### **2-5-16 Glenann PS in Glenann**

A talk given to Glenann PS in Glenann. The talk was given to the full school, pupils and staff. The talk went very well. Many of the children reported sightings of Red Squirrels previously at the feeders in the Cottage Wood feeders. They had many questions and they all enjoyed the videos that had been taken in the local area as they were familiar with many of the sites. No Squirrels had been seen in the school grounds but there was that possibility of Reds visiting as they were in the surrounding area. The school raised £125.00 through a monthly charity fundraise and they donated it to the group to assist with the work we carry out in the Glens.



**12-5-16 Cregagh Wood Hide Opening.**

This date saw the opening of the Hide in Cregagh Wood. Many of the Groups Committee Members attended the day along with Council Representatives, Councillors, NGO Challenge Fund management, Glens LPS staff and Katie English. No Squirrels sighted, but this was expected with the number in attendance, as it was a chance to get a good look in and around the Hide. Feedback from the visiting delegates was very positive, about the overall project, the work that had gone into it, and the standard of the end result.



**15-5-16 Open viewing day in Cregagh Wood Hide**

The full GRSG membership was invited to this. It was a great day with a number of members attending. Sadly not much spotted but well worth the visit. Thanks to those who volunteered to attend the Hide over its appointed opening times.

**29-5-16**

Walk in Breen Oak Wood taken by Chair/Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee and Red Squirrel Ranger, Gerard McCaughan. The weather was great and there was a lot of wildlife to see, though we didn't see any Squirrels on this walk.

**JUNE**

**4-6-2016 - LPS Walkabout meeting.**

Regretfully no one could attend on behalf of the group.

**16-6-2016**

Orla Black Submitted the Groups Annual Monitoring return to the Charity Commission.  
(BIG THANKS Orla)

**18-6-2016 Broughgammon Open Farm day.**

Chair and Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee attended with the Groups information table. It was a good day but not as well attended as in the past, perhaps because of a festival in Bushmills on the same date. We had several visitors pass on Red sightings locally to us and thankfully we didn't get any Greys reported from the Glens area. We did receive some from the Ballymoney and Coleraine areas. This event may not run next year as there may be plans to run it every two years; however this is to be confirmed. A big thanks to the Cole family for the continued invite and support in the work we do.

**26-6-2016 Ballypatrick Forest Walk and Butterfly Count**

The weather was terrible (RAIN). This event had been advertised on Facebook and in the local press. The numbers attending were low due to the weather. We may be able to link with Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland next year. Let's hope the weather will be better next time around.

**28-6-2016**

There was a few Grey sightings. An e mail was sent about one on the Torr Road and a monitoring site was set up by Vince for several weeks with no Grey being spotted during this period. Two more sites were set in Cushendun for Greys by Daniel, one site was a trap site and no Greys were spotted, just Reds. The second was just a test site to see if Squirrels are in the area and after two weeks only Reds were found.

**JULY****17-7-16 The Big Lunch Waterfront**

Big thanks to all who attended this day. We picked up three new members and were able to get out and talk to locals. I think this event also opened people's eyes to new parts of Waterfoot, who would have thought! Great community event for all and in its third year, it is getting bigger. The weather was good so a very enjoyable day was had by all. The Mayor of the council came and was very supportive of the work we are doing.

We had another group booking of the Hide this month and received a donation from the group.



**30-7-16 10 new feeders were donated**

10 New feeders were donated to the group by Nicholas Davis who received funding through a youth grant from Vinspired Charity. Nicholas was able to run a number of free workshops in the Larne area to help local wildlife, Bees, Birds, Squirrels and much more. Chair, Daniel McAfee collected the feeders from Nicholas at Carnfunnock Park. The Group thanked Nicholas and posted it on Facebook as well as sending it to the local press.



**30-7-16 Cloud 9 NI**

Cloud 9 NI, ran a Yoga Class in Glenariff with Ranger, Liz O'Connor assisting with a Squirrel walk. Big thanks to Cloud 9 as they make a donation to the group with every class they run. A great way to link health and well being with our local forestry and wildlife.

**Grey Squirrel Control**

7 Grey Squirrels were trapped and dispatched in Cushendun this month. There is two sightings in other locations and we have Daniel working on them.

## **AUGUST**

### ***9-8-2016***

The Group were informed of an outbreak of Squirrel Pox in the Glenarm Estate.

### ***12-8-2016***

Three observation sites have been set up in Glenarm Forest by Chair/Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee and Red Squirrel Ranger, Gerard Mc Caughan. Notices were put up on the same date to inform walkers and forestry users why the feeders had been removed and what to do if they were to find sickly or dead Reds. One of our volunteers working in the area, Dennis McBride carried out scatter feeding. SD cards are being picked up each Sunday and viewed. Some of the footage was sent to Jon Lees from the NIEA. To date, no sick Squirrels have been seen in the forest. Su Topping, BGB member and working in the Glenarm Estate, has reported that a second Red had been found with Pox two weeks previously. She then reports that no Squirrels have been seen this week. This is positive, with Jon Lees hoping that the outbreak will burn itself out. The observation sites have picked up a few Pine Martens at the two sites that have been gathering footage. We are also picking up a number of Hedgehogs, something we have not picked up in any of our forestry sites. But we have yet to pick up any Foxes or Badgers here. Some of the cameras are picking up to 400 videos each.

### ***18-8-16 Red Squirrel United Meeting.***

Chair and Red Squirrel Ranger, Daniel McAfee had a short meeting with Conor McKinney from Ulster Wildlife. Conor was looking to map out the groups area of work. He had a map and the area we work penned onto it. He is due to get the map digitized and reassured Daniel that their Ranger being put in place would not be working in the Glens, unless we request for assistance.

Daniel gave Conor seven dead Red Squirrels and two dead Grey Squirrels to assist with the educational work with the Red Squirrel United Project. These Reds were killed on the roads through the Glens These would be stuffed and used for display purposes by the RSU.

There has been another observation site set up in Glenariff by Vince this is to look into new parts of Glenariff for Squirrel populations, Red or Grey.

### ***23-8-2017 Vandalism in Glenariff Forest Garden area.***

Group members discovered a large amount of damage and vandalism in the garden feeder site in the forest. Members removed rubbish and litter that had been left behind and feeders that had been damaged. Jim Marshall was contacted to inform him of this. Jim had been aware of it and the campers had been moved on. He asked the group to keep him/ the forestry alerted of any other such acts. The forestry are trying to prevent this happening and don't want to see it especially with the new Caravan Park. They feel it may become more of an issue because of its close location to the cafe/toilet block/ education centre. Jim said actions had to been taken to remove any additional rubbish and if this happens again to try and photograph it and the area in order for them to act fast. Vince reinstalled feeders and wooden pegs that had been broken. Big thanks for this.





## SEPTEMBER

### ***Radio Ulster***

While at the last August meeting Vince received an email from a reporter at Radio Ulster. They enquired about doing a piece on the Red Squirrels in Cregagh Wood. This came off the back of an interview with Katy English and they wished to link the two items.

Daniel was in contact with the team at Radio Ulster and while they were very busy, wished to see Reds at the Hide. In this period there had been reduced feeder usage in some of our sites and Cregagh is one of these. They were advised that November and December would be a more fruitful time for seeing Red Squirrels. They said this would suit them better.

### ***Glenarm Pox.***

Monitoring carried on in Glenarm forest. We were glad to report that there had been no sick or dead Squirrels found in the forest. Su still working hard in the estate and has reported that there had been no additional Squirrels found suffering from Pox. All great news. She reported seeing female Squirrels that may be feeding young this may well be the case as we came into a mild and food filled autumn.

### ***Newsletters / Business Cards***

It was agreed to get some newsletters and business cards printed. They were picked up so they would be available at the meeting. They included our program for Squirrel Week on them. A request was made for volunteers to pass them out at different locations.

## **October**

### ***Squirrel Month***

We had a very busy month and I would like to say a Big Thank You to all those who took on events and activities to make it such a success.

This year saw GRSG have one of the most active Squirreltober to date. We had 16 activities and events across the month including four walks, one school walk, one quiz night, one feeder work shop, three Cregagh Wood Hide openings, three school visits and one info table event. Across the month at these events we reached one hundred and twenty four non-members directly.

Our events were well attended and this year we only had one walk that had very wet weather.

Our PRO also used the local papers to advertise them. We also used Facebook to reach out and inform of what we were doing and what work our active members were doing with feeding etc, and about how the events we had run went on the day. By using Facebook we were able to reach 14,579 views over seventeen posts. This is a great way of getting the message out about the work we are doing in the Glens and local area to help our Red Squirrels.

*(I must thank all those again who made all this possible, it was a small number and I hope next year more people will step up to support those leading walks or events as we are at risk of burning out those who are doing these things single handed. Committee support is greatly appreciated, simply by attending to assist set up for events or coming along as part of a walk can be support enough. Also by engaging family, friends of other groups or clubs you may be involved with we can spark an interest in getting more members and people to take on active work in the group. This is greatly needed for GRSG to continue what we do - Daniel McAfee, Chairperson GRSG.)*

### **11-10-16**

Over this month the Group suffered the loss of one of our Bushnell cameras from the Glenshesk area at one of our monitoring sites. This was reported to the police and posted on Facebook looking for info and to make people aware of it. We wanted help to see if we could get it back. Sadly we had no joy but there was a great show of support for the work we do and anger from many corners that someone would do such a thing to affect our work.

The following week we got word that a Pine Marten had been run over in the same area of Glenshesk, this was one of two kits that had been visiting one of the monitoring sites. We know the Pine Martens are having a positive effect on our fight with Grey Squirrels, so this is sad news for the area.

### ***Glenarm Pox Outbreak monitoring.***

Daniel and Dennis still monitoring feed sites in Glenarm forest looking for sick Squirrels. To date we have found no sick Squirrels. Feeders to be put back up over the month of November.

### **26-10-16**

Daniel attended a workshop held by NACN and the council on how to attract volunteers/ members to your group. It was very good and we, as a group are covering all areas and offer over and above many ways people can get involved in the work we do, or to take part in events.



## November

### **6-11-16** *Glenariff Forest Park with the Ballymena Bird Watching Club*

We hosted a walk of Glenariff Forest Park with the Ballymena Bird Watching Club. This walk had been organised for 2015 but on the date it was too stormy for the walk to take place. The club had asked for it to be held at the same time in 2016. The walk went very well with seven members from the Ballymena Bird Watching Club attending, they had all visited the Forest Park many times before but many had never spotted Red Squirrels there. As well as looking for the Reds they were keen to see what birds they could spot and the garden site offered a wide range of birds that they were happy to see. The group were able to identify the holes on one of the trees as being the work of a Woodpecker, this, they were very excited about.

We did the Waterfall Walk and while coming to the end of the walk we had not been lucky to see any Squirrels, we did spot several male Bullfinch that were feeding on berries in the garden site. The last hope of seeing a Red was to take them towards the yard feeder, and almost as if it had been planned, a Red shot out in front of us and ran into the yard. It was a short sighting but for those who seen it they said it was worthwhile.



### **17-11-16** *Micro Grant*

Daniel and Gerard attended a meeting in Broughshane as part of the Micro Grant, we had been awarded for equipment to assist in the work of the group.

### **18-11-16** *Challenge Fund*

Daniel sent our application into the Challenge Fund for a project in partnership with the CCG Council. This project, if accepted, would offer the wildlife of the Cottage Wood, Cushendall additional Bird boxes and shelter support, by enhancing the plant life in the wood land. It would also fund information boards to help educate the people that use the park.

### **23-11-16**

One of our members, Fern Major from Friends of Glenariff submitted an application for a shared grant for equipment that can be used by different groups for events, the main item on this grant was a PA system for use at indoor and out door events.

### ***Glenarm Pox Outbreak monitoring***

Monitoring was ongoing by Daniel and Dennis with Vince assisting in the last few weeks and also help from the Glenarm Wildlife Group. The feed sites and cameras were removed and the feeders put back in place.

## December

GRSG had no events planned for the month of December as it is a busy time for all. We did have a few things through email:-

LPS were in contact wishing to partner in a walk in Glenariff Forest Park. They asked for it to be on 9<sup>th</sup> of September. We pencilled it in, as it had to be taken to the next meeting and also informed them of our own extensive program in October when Squirrel Month takes place.

Geraldine Moorcroft got in touch through Facebook saying that she had a small amount of bird feed that she wanted to give to the Squirrel Group. She had problems with feeding the birds in her garden due to rats from the garden next door, she didn't want to dump the food she had, so dropped it off in Cushendall and Vince was able to pick it up the feed was used at the live camera.



We received an email from the Friends of Glenariff, see below.

*It is with great delight that the Friends of Glenariff send you this email. After 6 years of fundraising and applying for Capital Funds we have secured the monies required to build Phase 1 of the proposed Glenariff Community & Recreation Centre. The new centre will open for business in March/April 2018 and we hope that it may be of service to you.*

This was great news for the area and for the community of Glenariff.

We also got word back from the Challenge Fund that we had been unsuccessful with this year's Challenge Fund Application. This is the first year we had been unsuccessful. The council were informed as they had agreed to fund the project. It was hoped it was like last year, where we had been unsuccessful yet two days later we got a letter saying we had got it, but no such luck this year.

There had been a small number of Greys Squirrel reported. Gerard dispatched three over this month in the Ballyvoy area at monitoring sites that he has had in place. So it is worth keeping an eye on your feeders or just refreshing people's memories that we need sightings.

Vince spoke to the new owners of Kilmore House and was give permeation to set up a feed site in the grounds. They are happy for the group to work in the grounds of the house and they strongly support the work we are doing for our local Reds.

A feed site and camera were set up and there was Red activity on the site very quickly. Vince has been appointed GRSG contact for this site and will be carrying out all works with assistance if required.

The Pine Marten was found to be still alive and well in Glenariff. It is visiting nightly using the Squirrel feeders. That particular site saw no decrease in the Red activity at the feeders. This was great news for the Reds.

## **JANUARY 2017**

### ***4-1-17 Grey Control***

Gerard dispatched three additional Grey Squirrels at sites he was working in.

There was a sighting of a Grey in the Cregagh Wood area on the 16-1-17. Footage from the Hide was viewed but no Grey was sighted. On the 18-1-17 three additional monitoring sites were installed within the wood and on 24-1-17 the sites were reviewed. Thankfully no Greys were found to be using the feeders. We found Reds in two of the three sites. This gave us a total of seven cameras in Glendun, two of the seven showing Grey activity. These were marked for trapping over the coming weeks.

A Grey Squirrel was reported near to the Glenariff Chapel at feeders in a garden. A camera and a trap were been put in place by Vince and observations carried out.

### ***Council Support for Cregagh Wood***

The council were approached about their obligation as part of the management plan agreed in 2015, to fund GRSG for Grey Squirrel Control. They have agreed to fulfil this commitment.

### ***15-1-17 Glenariff Walk***

We held our annual Glenariff Forest Birthday Walk. Sadly not a great turn out from members but we did have new faces on the walk and we were able to see a Red Squirrel. Daniel, Liz and Vince attended the walk.

### ***24-1-17 PayPal***

The Groups PayPal membership and donation page went live and was posted on Facebook with a new member joining within minutes of it being posted.

### ***25-1-17 Good news from Friends of Glenariff (see email below)***

*'Good news - the bid we put into DFC with GRSG and Oisins CLG named as partners was successful'*  
Many thanks Fern Major.

### ***26-1-17 Talk delivered to the Portstewart Gardening Club***

The talk was held in Agherton Parish Centre. There were twenty members of the Portstewart Gardening Club in attendance. Daniel talked about the work the Groups does in the Glens and the work that we have done throughout Northern Ireland to help conserve our native Red Squirrels, not only for this generation but also for the next. Also about Grey Squirrel control and the damage they cause to Red Squirrels and the greater environment. Trail Camera footage was shown from sites across the Glens. The talk and videos were well received and there was a number of questions answered afterwards with great interest in the Trail Cameras for use in the garden. The Club made a donation to support our work with an additional donation from one of their members.

### ***31-1-17 Red Squirrel United Project***

Conor McKinney from Ulster Wild Life and a Ranger for the Red Squirrel United Project met with Daniel in Ballycastle to give an update on the Red Squirrel United Project. Conor informed Daniel that as part of the Project there would be a full Northern Ireland Survey following on from the survey by Dave Tosh in 2015. Daniel agreed to help with this survey.

## **FEBRUARY 2017**

### ***Grey Control***

There were a total of four Grey Squirrels dispatched over this month. Three more from the Ballyvoy area which was being monitored by Gerard, and one removed from Cregagh Wood. The council was informed and the monitoring sites still in place with a second Grey suspected in the area.

### ***11-2-17 N. Ireland Squirrel Forum Meeting***

Daniel and Gerard attended along with Rachel Bain from the Causeway Coast and Glens Council.

### ***Red Squirrel United Project.***

From the NISF meeting, issues arose about how the UW and the RSU project were presenting the work they were doing and the area they were covering in relation to the Glens. The forum had been given a presentation about the project and areas covered in the Glens were mentioned several times. This proved to be not the case and therefore questions were put to the UW's Conor McKinney. A number of calls were made and emails confirming what had been agreed at the planning stage of the RSU project in particular about the GRSG not requiring the project in the Glens, as it would impact on the work and the sites we had built up over the previous nine years.

### ***19-2-17 Breen walk***

A few people came and took part in the walk. The walk was a success and we were able to see a Red Squirrel. This was the first Red that all those attending the walk had ever seen. From this walk we had two new members sign up. They took membership forms and gave their membership monies to Daniel who was the guide that day. There was lots to see and hear on the walk and lots of frogs in the ponds and in the fire dams.

### ***23-2-17 Meeting with CCG Council***

Daniel and Rachel Bain had a meeting with the Chairperson of the CCG council with the intended agenda of setting a legacy fund between the council and the GRSG. A number of ideas were talked about and ideas to be taken to the council. Overall the main focus for the Chairperson was a project in the Coleraine area in partnership with Coleraine Rotary Group, with ways to get a focus on it. Sadly this didn't prove to be of any benefit to the GRSG. She did suggest a possible grant that we could apply for. Rachel said she will look at it and send the info on to the Group.

## **MARCH**

### ***4-3-17 Glenarm Wildlife Group Walk***

We invited the Glenarm Wildlife Group to come along on a walk of Cregagh Wood and a visit to the hide. It was very wet but we went ahead with the walk. We had only entered the wood 15 minutes and had yet to finish the introductions when we spotted our first Red Squirrel. This was the group's first visit to the wood. At the end of the walk we called into the Hide and spent an hour and enjoyed some tea and biscuits. While in the Hide we spotted a Red Squirrel off in the distance but it didn't

call to the feeders in the site. The Glenarm Wildlife Group members are interested in doing a walk again later in the year.

**10-3-17 Hedge planting as part of Eco week in Ballycastle integrated PS**



As part of Ballycastle Integrated PS Eco week, Daniel McAfee Chair/ Red Squirrel Ranger, was approached to assist the school in an activity. We had a number of young hedging plants left over from other projects and the school had a new fence erected with a number of trees removed. And so twenty metres of native hedging was planted by Primary 6 in order to, through time, offer much needed cover and protection for wildlife in the playground. The Gardening Club within the school will maintain the hedge with clipping as needed. All the children were able to take part. The hedge was a mix of Hazel, Black Thorn, Hawthorn and Mountain Ash. This will offer shelter and a food source for birds, insects and mammals that are in the playground.

**19-3-17 Cottage wood Walk Cushendall**

After a week of rain the weather cleared up and we had a great day for our walk guided by Daniel McAfee Chair and Red Squirrel Ranger and Raymond Watson, Site volunteer. We were very lucky to see one of the resident Red Squirrels and it gave us a great show, as it showed off its talent of running through the trees in the wood. A very enjoyable walk.





**27-3-17 Talk to Ballycastle Brownies and Rainbows section of the Girl guides.**

An educational talk was given to the Ballycastle Brownies and Rainbows section of the Girl Guides. There were 12 Brownies and 9 Rainbows. The girls were all very interested and enjoyed the videos from our wild view cameras. At the end of the talk all the girls were given a colouring in sheet and an activity list of all our walks for the next year.



**DFC Grant**

After an approach from Fern Major and some research from committee we have been successful in our bid for 2 x TV screens, 2 Cameras, 2 camera cable locks, 2 SD card readers and access to a PA system. This has come from The Department for Communities.

**APRIL**

**10-4-17 Talk to the Antrim RSPB Group.**

Chair Daniel McAfee was asked by the Antrim RSPB Group in the Green Mount Campus, on the night there was 15-20 members of the RSPB group. The meeting was enjoyed by all and there was a strong interest in Grey Squirrel control many had experienced Greys causing damage to bird feeders and



garden plants. The Group would be interested in arranging a walk some time over the year in one of the forestry's we work in.

**25-4-17 Talk to St.Patricks PS., Glenariff.**

The school had contacted committee member Joe McKavanagh about the GRSG coming to give a talk to the Primary one two and three classes. Joe passed on Daniels contact details and a date was arranged. The talk was given to all three classes it was a power point presentation and videos that had been taken at some of our monitoring sites. All the children had seen Red Squirrels in the wild and had all visited the Forest Park and the Cottage Wood. These were the locations they had seen the Red, a small number of them had Reds in their gardens or in family members gardens. The staff and teachers also enjoyed the talk as well.

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Over this year the group have taken part in, and attended many events. This is a brief breakdown of the group's year. It does not include committee meetings; quiz nights, active members feeding sites or Grey Squirrel control.

Talks	10 Average 1-1.5hours	Average total hours 10.5
Walks	14 Average 2-2.5hours	Average total hours 35
Meetings	7 Average 1-2.5hours	Average total hours 17.5
Stalls	6 Average 3-4 hours	Average total hours 24
		Total hours 87

We thank all those who give their time to enable the group to attend these events over the year. Without you this would not be possible.

**Thanks to Supporters**

The Glens Red Squirrel Group wish to thank those groups and organisations who have worked with and have supported GRSG in our work this year:-

National Trust, Ulster Wildlife, Heart of the Glens Landscape Partnership, Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum, Northern Ireland Forest Service, The Wood Land Trust, Causeway Coast and Glens Council, St. Patricks and St. Bridget's P.S. The Heart of the Glens Festival, Laragh Lodge Restaurant, Glenariff Forest Tea House, Glens Garden Furniture, Murray and Partners, Richmond's Feeds. Ballyeamon Barn, NACN, LCS Electrics and Carey Cleaning Machines.

The Group would also like to thank those dedicated members who carry out feeding, trapping, attending information stalls, walks, talks, tree planting and events that the group are asked to attend. A big thanks to those members who worked and are working hard dealing with grants and funding applications for the group. The work that the Glens Red Squirrel Group does would not be possible if it wasn't for all the hard work of all these members.