

NEWBOROUGH RED SQUIRRELS 'WHITE' ON TRACK FOR RECOVERY

18th March 2005

Newborough forest is home to one of the last colonies of the native red squirrel in Wales and recently it had an unusual addition – an albino female squirrel called 'Rosie'. The animal was obtained through the UK captive breeding programme and was released into the forest during the late autumn. Newborough now contains around twenty wild red squirrels that have been released, and it is hoped that many of these animals will breed this year and that the colony will grow and flourish.

The return of the red squirrels has been a major conservation success for a native species that is almost extinct in the wild elsewhere in Wales . To their delight, several local people have seen red squirrels in Newborough forest. Animals have recently been seen foraging in woodland along side the road leading through the forest to the beach car park, and also near the Parc Mawr car park.

Dr Craig Shuttleworth of the Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels said, 'The Newborough project has provided a new home for many captive red squirrels including several Cumbrian animals that were rescued after the woodlands they lived in were cut down.' He went on, 'Albino animals are quite a rarity in the wild, and we were overjoyed when we heard that one needed a new home.'

Mr Martin Bailey, a local wildlife expert, added, 'Newborough forest is a fantastic wildlife haven and the red squirrel population is of local and national significance. Red squirrels are one of the most delightful and attractive woodland animals and form an important part of the forest ecosystem.'

Anglesey is already home to the second largest colony of wild red squirrel in Wales , with the population in Pentraeth forest. The conservation of red squirrels throughout the island is supported by the Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels, a local community group. Anyone interested in getting involved in red squirrel conservation can contact the Friends on 01248 725700.

Ends

For further information or for digital images please contact Dr Craig Shuttleworth on 07966 150847

Editors Notes:

The Friends of the Anglesey Red Squirrels are an independent group working to conserve the red squirrel on Anglesey and across Wales .

The organisation has over 300 members and has an active community education program with school children across the island.

