

GREY SQUIRRELS ARE KILLING REDS

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The true picture: A Cumbrian red squirrel suffering from squirrel pox

YOU asked members of the public "Should grey squirrels be culled to protect the reds?" (News & Star, November 10)

This is what grey squirrels do to red squirrels when they pass on parapox virus. Would you have had the same response had those questioned been shown the reality?

Grey squirrels do not chase red squirrels away – they kill them.

Grey squirrels are a carrier of parapox virus which does not affect them, but is deadly to red squirrels within five to 15 days.

The only way to stop red squirrels contracting and dying slowly and painfully of parapox is to ensure greys cannot come into contact with them.

It is impossible to fence in the reserves/refuges to protect them from incursion by the greys.

Perhaps a polite notice asking the greys not to enter would work? I think not.

Control of greys is imperative if we are to protect the native red squirrel from extinction.

The red squirrel refuges must be protected to buy the time required until the immuno-contraceptive is available for greys and parapox vaccine is available for reds.

Two Cumbrian refuges already have grey squirrels within their boundary.

The photograph is a Cumbrian red squirrel with parapox virus which was found inside a red squirrel refuge last week.

The need to control grey squirrels is real and immediate.

A KIRKBRIDE

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