

Red Squirrel Surveys NIEA Specific Requirements

Red squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and their dreys are protected under Article 10 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended). It is an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take
- 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.

On assessing your planning application NIEA considers that there is reasonable likelihood of red squirrels being present on the site and affected by the proposed development. To ensure your development proposal complies with legislation and planning policy, NIEA has recommended to the Planning Authority that an appropriate red squirrel survey should be carried out prior to the determination of your application.

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

In order to ensure an adequate assessment the following specifications should be followed:

- NIEA recommends that all works comply with British Standard 42020:2013, *Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development*. This provides recommendations and guidance for those engaged in planning and development, whose work might affect or have implications for conservation, or the enhancement of biodiversity.
- The applicant must ensure that the commissioned surveyor(s) has the necessary experience and qualifications to carry out this work. The qualifications and experience of all surveyors must be included in the survey report. NIEA recommends that the surveyor(s) is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- The survey information must be presented in a written report and must include appropriately scaled maps.
- Survey dates, times and weather conditions must be recorded in the written report.
- 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. If weather is unsuitable surveys should be postponed.
- The survey should establish whether red squirrels have established dreys or use the area for foraging. The site and surrounding area should be covered.
- The exact location(s) of any drey(s) found must be mapped. All evidence of red squirrels found, for example sightings and hair tube surveys, must be included in the written report.

- If necessary, the report should recommend the most appropriate ways in which red squirrels can be protected from adverse impacts caused by the proposed development. Mitigation measures should cover all phases of the development - before, during and after construction.
- Surveys should be submitted to the Planning Authority within one year of being carried out.
- 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.
- All red squirrel records should be reported to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)*
- For more guidance and information please refer to the following publications and websites:

NIEA Development Management website

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/development-management>

Wildlife Management and Licensing web page

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/biodiversity/wildlife-licensing-and-management>

The Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/bio-diversity/northern-ireland-squirrel-forum>

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-8C8BLY>

*** Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)**

<http://www.nmni.com/cedar>

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

www.cieem.net

