

Red Squirrel

Sciurus vulgaris

Mammal · Here all year · does not hibernate



Photo by Peter Trimming, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Smaller and lighter than the grey squirrel, with a slim frame, a rich chestnut to dark brown coat that varies with season, a paler underside and — in winter — prominent ear tufts. Southern Scotland is one of the most important remaining refuges for red squirrels in Britain, and the conifer forests and mixed woodland around Dumfries hold them. Sightings are a genuine local privilege rather than a routine event.

BEHAVIOUR

Red squirrels are active by day, especially early morning, and spend far more time high in the canopy than greys do. They feed on conifer seed, stripping cones down to a ragged core, along with hazelnuts, fungi and tree buds, and cache food in scattered stores. They do not hibernate, but stay in the drey through the worst weather. Litters are born in spring and often again in summer.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Squirrels (Sciuridae)
SIZE	Body 19-23 cm plus a 15-20 cm tail
UK STATUS	Protected; a conservation priority — southern Scotland is a stronghold

Photo by Peter Trimming, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Natureville