

National Red Squirrel Awareness Week 2020

National Red Squirrel Awareness Week ran from September 21st to 27th and both our events ran from our Facebook page. The bulletin is a little later this month so the winning art competition pictures can be included. Thanks go to Karena and Julia for running the art competition and online auction. Artists produced some great pictures and the judges, Alan Marriott and Iona Stewart-Richardson had a hard time choosing winners.

Alan Rowe won first prize in the Christmas card category and Loren Brooks, the greetings card. These, plus 6 more chosen entries, will be on our new set of Christmas cards and greeting cards. As we no longer have a shop, the packs will be sold online. More about this next time.



Online auction

Our first and hugely successful online auction to mark Red Squirrel Week finished on the 27th. It contained 20 generously donated items and over 100 people joined the specially created Facebook group and participated in the fun.

It raised in excess of £250, so thank you to everyone who donated an item because without them it would not have been possible but also a thanks to all those that placed bids.

Due to the success of this one there will be a Christmas online auction, which already has some unique items, including an original watercolour. We would love to have some homemade craft items, and if anyone has anything they could donate please let us know. If you want to join in, please look at our Facebook page @wightsquirrelproject

Karena

Annual newsletter

Usually the annual hard copy newsletter comes out this month but, as with many things this year, there are changes. The next hard copy will be out in the spring of 2021 so that a whole year of data is shared, instead of roughly July—June, as in the past. A monthly bulletin will continue until at least 2021.

Road casualties

There are always at least two peaks in road casualties each year, usually when young are dispersing in spring and autumn. Blackspots are the main Newport to Ryde road, Wilmingham Lane, Halletts Shute, the Ryde to Brading road and Shalfleet to Yarmouth main road. Please be especially careful driving in these areas and please report squirrel casualties you see.

Data collection

I'm trying to streamline data collection from citizen scientists. There is also an app and online form but these take a bit of work to input into a main spreadsheet. Most people can input via Excel easily enough, so if you can use Excel, please do. Then just email the file to me at wightsquirrels@hotmail.com. These are the headings—

Date	Your name	Location	Grid or	Habitat	Species	Greys	Comments	How many	Age	Health	Running	Eating	Dead in/on	Death	Comments	General
	sighted	postcode						sighted								Comments

Monitoring is THE most important aspect of red squirrel work, so please keep the Citizen Science coming.

Hairtube surveys to collect hair for DNA analysis are planned for 2021. These results will fill in the gaps from the previous two studies. The second genetic paper is finished but not published yet. Tests for adenovirus and squirrelpox have been undertaken as well and this should be published soon.

Camera traps are commonly used elsewhere in the UK, so the Wight Squirrel Project will purchase cameras, again for next year. I will have to work out an Isle of Wight strategy for monitoring between now and then. The bi-annual walks are still undertaken by the most loyal and dedicated volunteers.

Helen