

Evidence for grey squirrel policy in England

Overview

As one of the key people / organisations we work with on grey squirrels in England, we are asking for your evidence to help us decide whether we need to evolve Government policy and if so, how.

We will publish a summary of the evidence provided in January 2014 and use it to inform a workshop comprising key organisations. Through this workshop and associated work we will generate options for evolving the policy and then appraise them. We will present the options and our recommendation to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We plan to let you know the Secretary of State's decision in February 2014.

Why we are consulting

Government's forestry policy is to protect, improve and expand England's woodland, humanely managing the impacts of grey squirrels is an important part of that ambition.

Specifically the **Government's Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement published in January 2013** said that:

"Diseases are not the only challenge. Unsustainable populations of some deer species and grey squirrels have a significant impact on the successful establishment and regeneration of new woodland, woodland management, the quality of timber and the quality of woodland habitats. Similarly, invasive species such as *Rhododendron* can cause problems. We will continue to support landowners' collaboration to ensure sustainable, well-managed wild deer populations, control invasive species and encourage natural regeneration."

Defra and Forestry Commission England first published a grey squirrel policy in 2006: **Grey squirrels and England's woodlands – policy and action**. The time is now right to review that policy as many people are telling us it isn't working and consider what changes should be made, if any, in the light of further evidence.

Following advice from us and other parts of the forestry sector, the Secretary of State has asked Forestry Commission England to review grey squirrel policy working with Defra and Natural England.

We now need your feedback on the evidence supporting policy.

Please follow the link below to the online survey and complete all applicable questions. Although

Please select only one item

Drey poking and shooting

Please select only one item

Other

Please select only one item

Please provide evidence of how effective the method is at limiting damage to
2 your woodlands, if you have any?

Do you think there are other control methods or improvements to existing
3 methods that warrant investigation? If so, which?

4 What evidence can you provide to support their potential suitability?

To what extent are your management choices affected by presence of grey
5 squirrel?

How has the presence of grey squirrels affected the outcomes of your
6 management choices?

Biodiversity impacts

Do you have any further evidence on biodiversity impacts of grey squirrels, for
7 example on species highlighted as priorities under biodiversity strategy?

8 Do you have any evidence in terms of benefits of grey squirrels to biodiversity?

Supporting collaboration and public engagement

9 Do you undertake any collaborative action for grey squirrel control?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If yes, is this in or around an existing red squirrel population?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

Not applicable

If you undertake collaborative control outside red squirrel areas please can you **10** describe how and why the collaboration was established and how it works?

Do you consider that the collaborative action for red squirrel conservation is **11** effective?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

How do you think this approach could or should be improved, continued or **12** extended?

Do you have examples of effective local community engagement in relation to **13** grey squirrel control?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details below.

14 Is your community engagement in relation to red squirrel conservation?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

Does the view of people in general or the local community impact on your grey

15 squirrel control?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If yes, in what way?

Grant aid

16 How important is grant aid to any grey squirrel management you undertake?

Please select only one item

Very important

Important

Unimportant

If you receive grant aid for squirrel management would you continue if grants

17 covered the following % of costs?

Yes No

80%

Please select only one item

50%

Please select only one item

20%

Please select only one item

No grant

Please select only one item

Do you agree that squirrel control should be made a pre-requisite for
18 government woodland grant aid?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

Research

Have you used recent research to help you select or improve grey squirrel
19 control techniques?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If yes, please give details of the report.

20 How do you access up-to-date information about grey squirrel management?

| | Frequently | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forestry Commission website <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forest Research website <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other online sources <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Journals and other publications <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leaflets and posters <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Telephone for advice <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In person from an expert <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Manufacturer's information <i>Please select only one item</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Best practice on the Public Forest Estate

To what extent do you look to the PFE for guidance on, and demonstration of,
21 best practice in grey squirrel control?

Legislation

What evidence is there to suggest a legal requirement to control grey squirrels
22 will be more effective than current voluntary measures?

What elements, if any, of the proposed Commission Regulation do you believe
23 will be most/least useful in advancing control of grey squirrels?

Further comment

24 Is there anything else you want to tell us about this review?

About you

25 Full name

26 Email address

This is optional, but if you enter your email address then you will be able to return to edit your consultation at any time until you submit it. You will also receive an acknowledgement email when you complete the consultation.

27 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If yes, please give the name of the organisation.