

Restoring Red Squirrels in East Anglia

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Two enclosures in Norfolk are the beginning of an experiment to re-introduce red squirrels to East Anglia

[The Countryside Restoration Trust](#) has launched a red-squirrel breeding initiative that chairman Robin Page hopes will lead to them eventually returning to their former East Anglian strongholds. The trust has built two enclosures, with overhead runs into nearby hedgerow oak trees, on its smallholding at Themelthorpe, Norfolk, in the hope of encouraging the resident reds to breed. Other breeding sites have been set up by the East Anglia Red Squirrel Group, and it's hoped that the severely endangered creature, once widespread in the region, will recover its numbers.



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However, Mr Page argues that action needs to be taken against grey squirrels if his dream is to be fulfilled. 'Greys invaded Thetford Forest in the last century, where the Forestry Commission failed to take the necessary precautions. It and Defra need to take urgent action to control the population if the red-squirrel schemes are to have any hope of lasting success,' he says. 'Greys and reds simply cannot mix without it meaning the total eradication of the latter. Sadly, no one has yet developed a protective vaccination, so the only way is population control.'

Mr Page says he's dismayed by the prevailing casual attitude to the plight of the red squirrel. 'The British seem to care more about the black rhinoceros and the Siberian tiger than they do about red squirrels, but they are just as important in my view, and their numbers are plummeting fast.' Jack Watkins.

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