

# Progress towards eradication of grey squirrels from Aberdeen



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# Scottish Red Squirrel Context



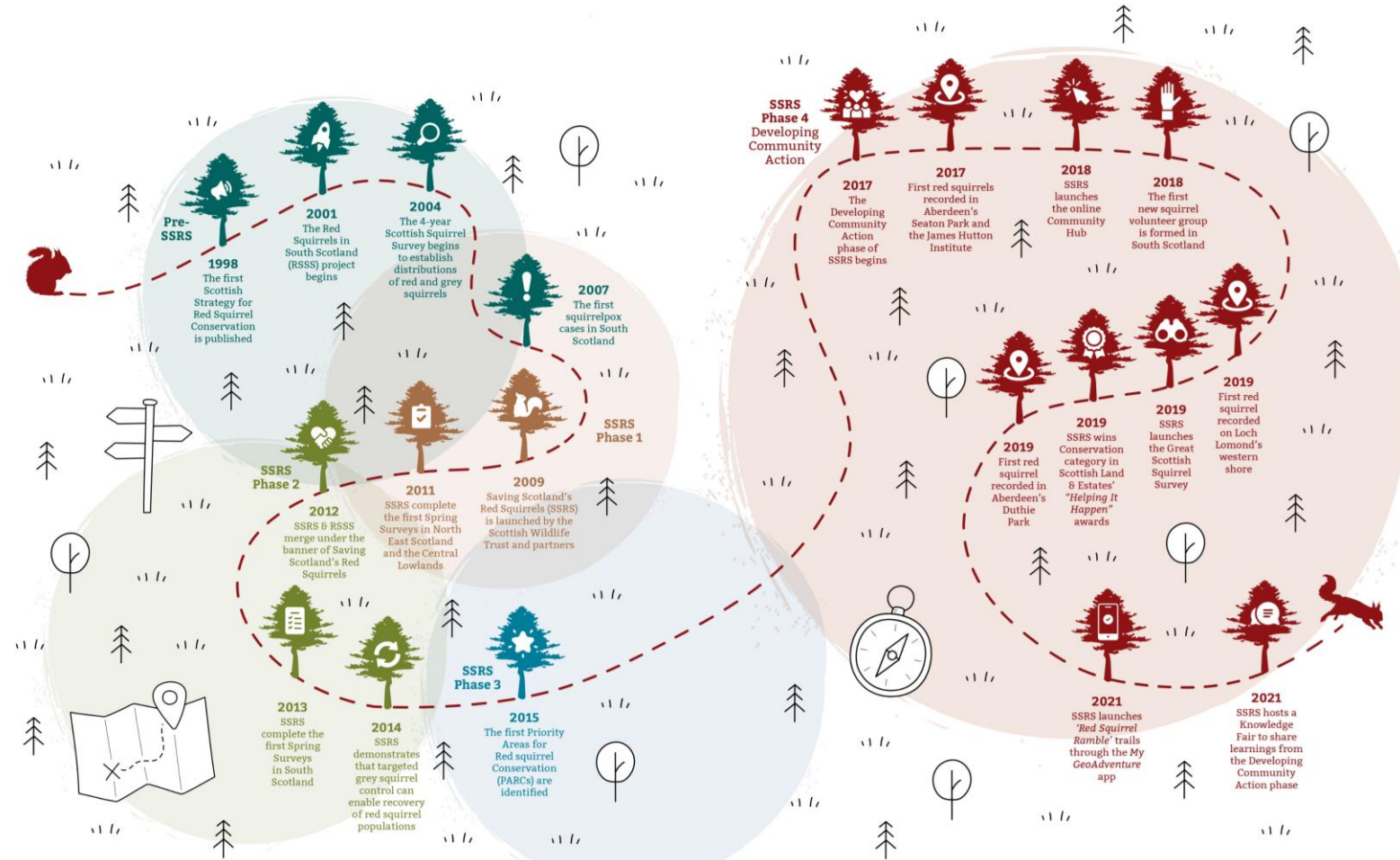
Approximately 75% of the UK's remaining red squirrels can be found in Scotland

Primarily a species conservation issue

*Increasing attention as an INNS and forestry issue*

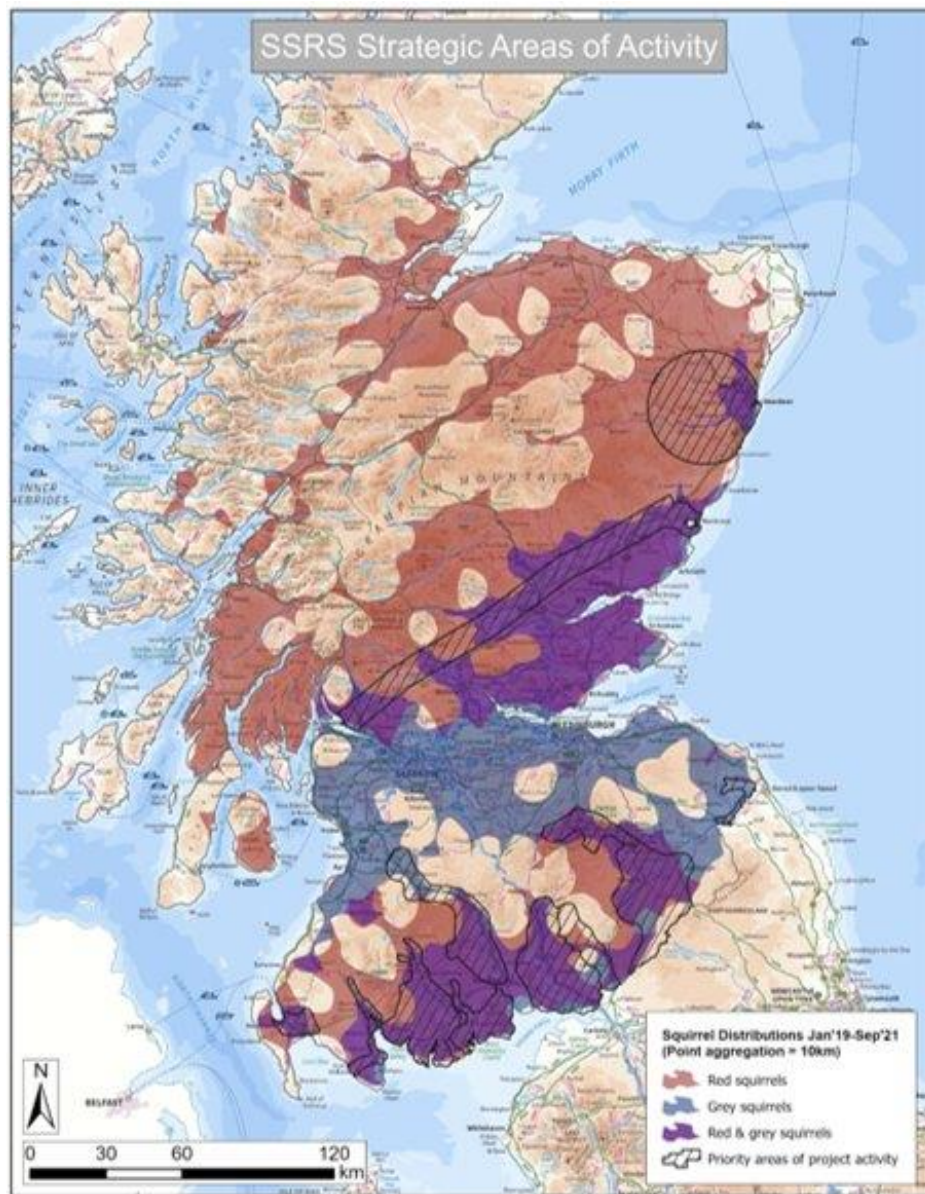
2015 Scottish Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation, published by the Scottish Squirrel Group

*Delivered to date by Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) project*



# SSRS Strategic Aims

1. Protect red only population north of the highland line
  2. Support red squirrels in selected areas where greys also occur
- **NE** – eradicate & prevent immigration from south
  - **Central Lowlands** – contain spread of greys and SQPV below Highland Line
  - **South** – reduce density of grey squirrels in priority areas & promote long term volunteer control efforts



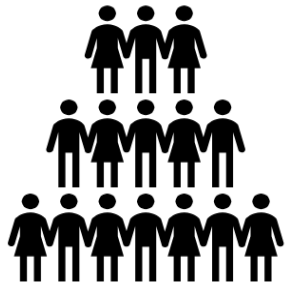




# Northeast Scotland - why eradication?



- 1971 - single, accidental, introduction event in Aberdeen city
- 10-20 individuals from southern Britain
  - Small founding population
  - Remained geographically and genetically **isolated** from mainland population
- If not managed – Grampian & Highland red squirrels at risk
- If successful – first eradication of invasive urban grey squirrel population
- Significant lag of c.40 years before action taken
- ££ cost of inaction in early stages of colonisation has been huge
  - Estimated at >£1.5M to date

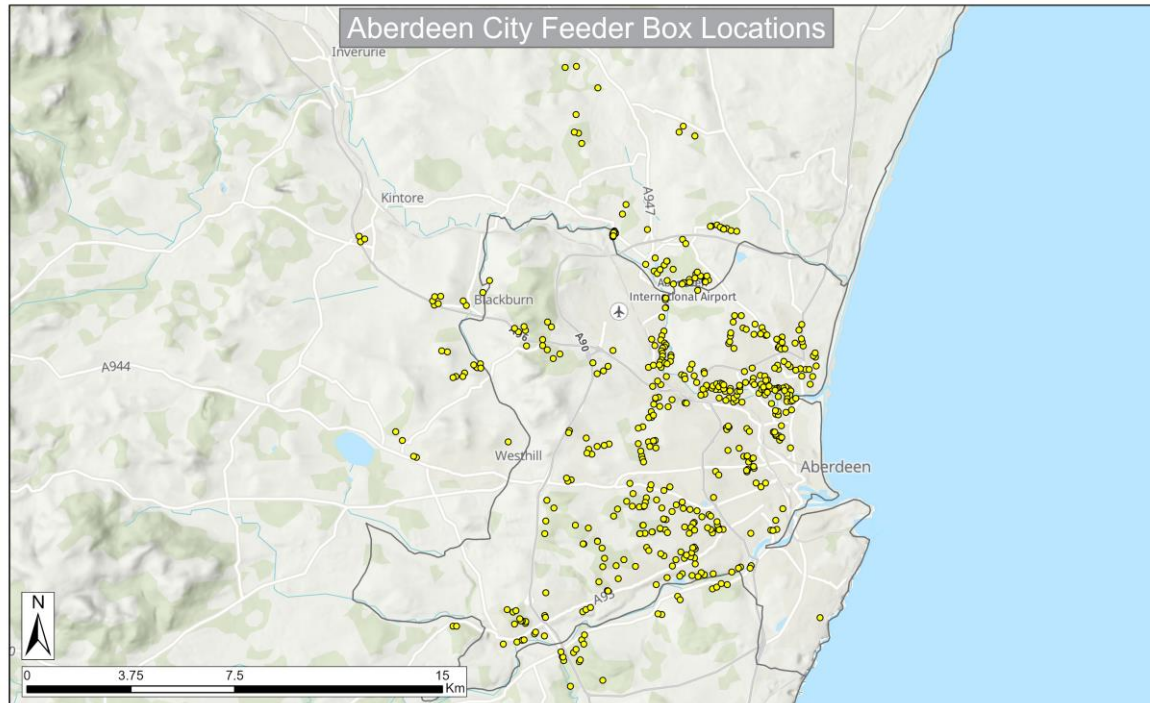


# Rapid Response Monitoring



Aberdeen

Mearns & NE Angus

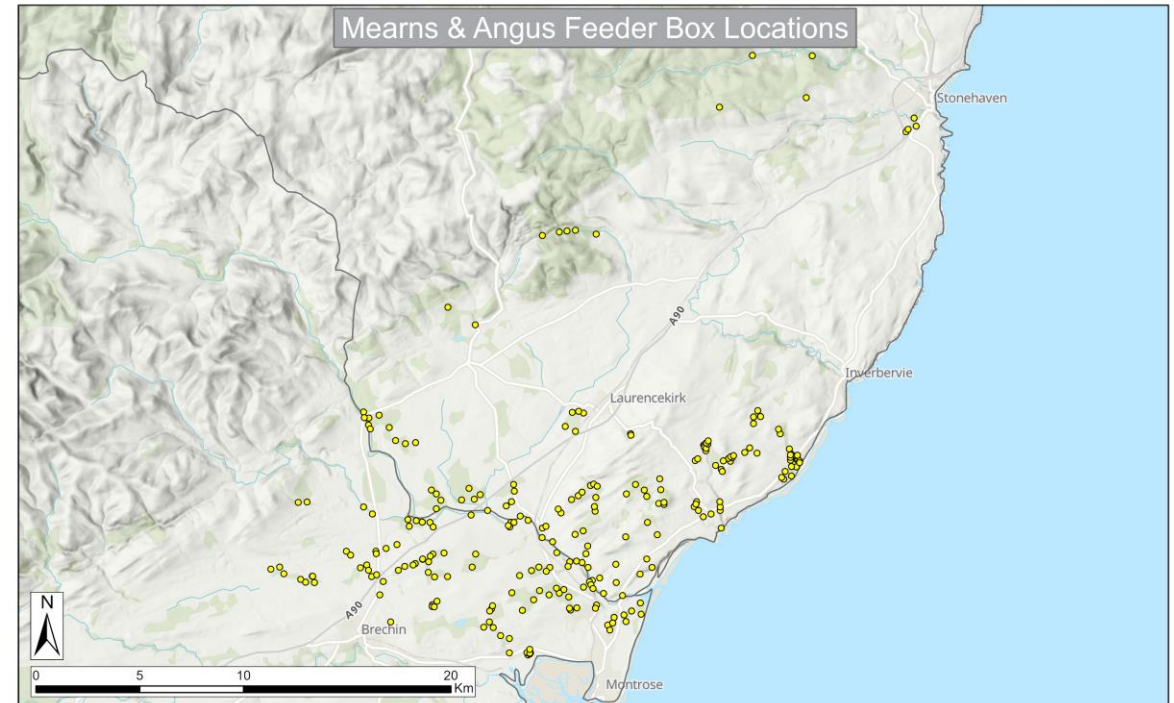


Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Harbourside House  
110 Commercial Street  
Edinburgh, EH6 6NF

31/08/2023

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● Aberdeen Feeder Boxes  
□ Local Authority Boundaries



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● Mearns & Angus Feeders  
□ Local Authority Boundaries

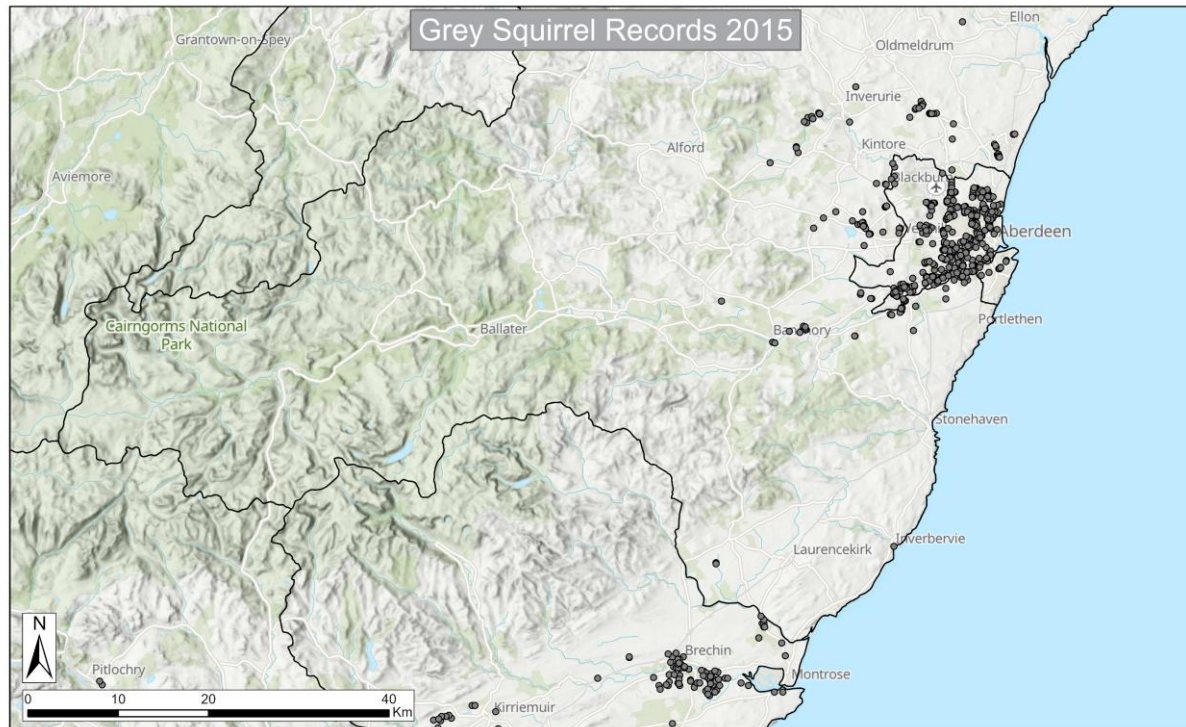




# Grey squirrel distribution in 2022



2015



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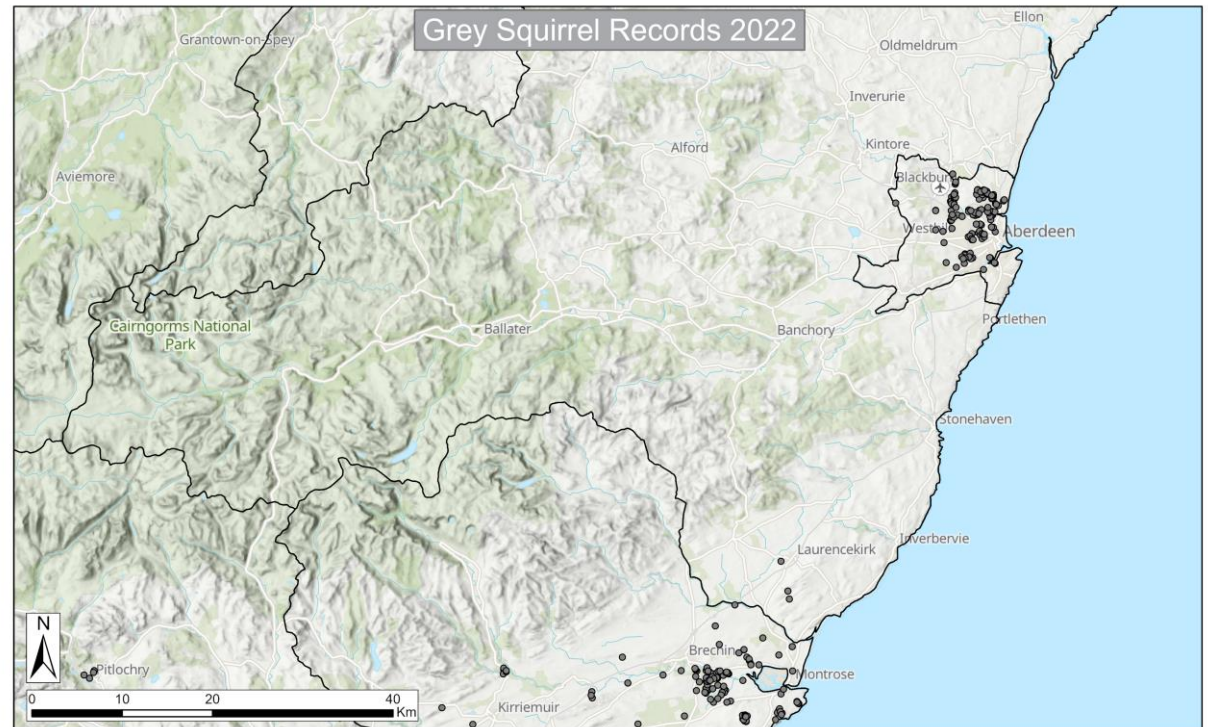
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Local Authority  
Boundaries

Grey Squirrel  
Records 2015



2022



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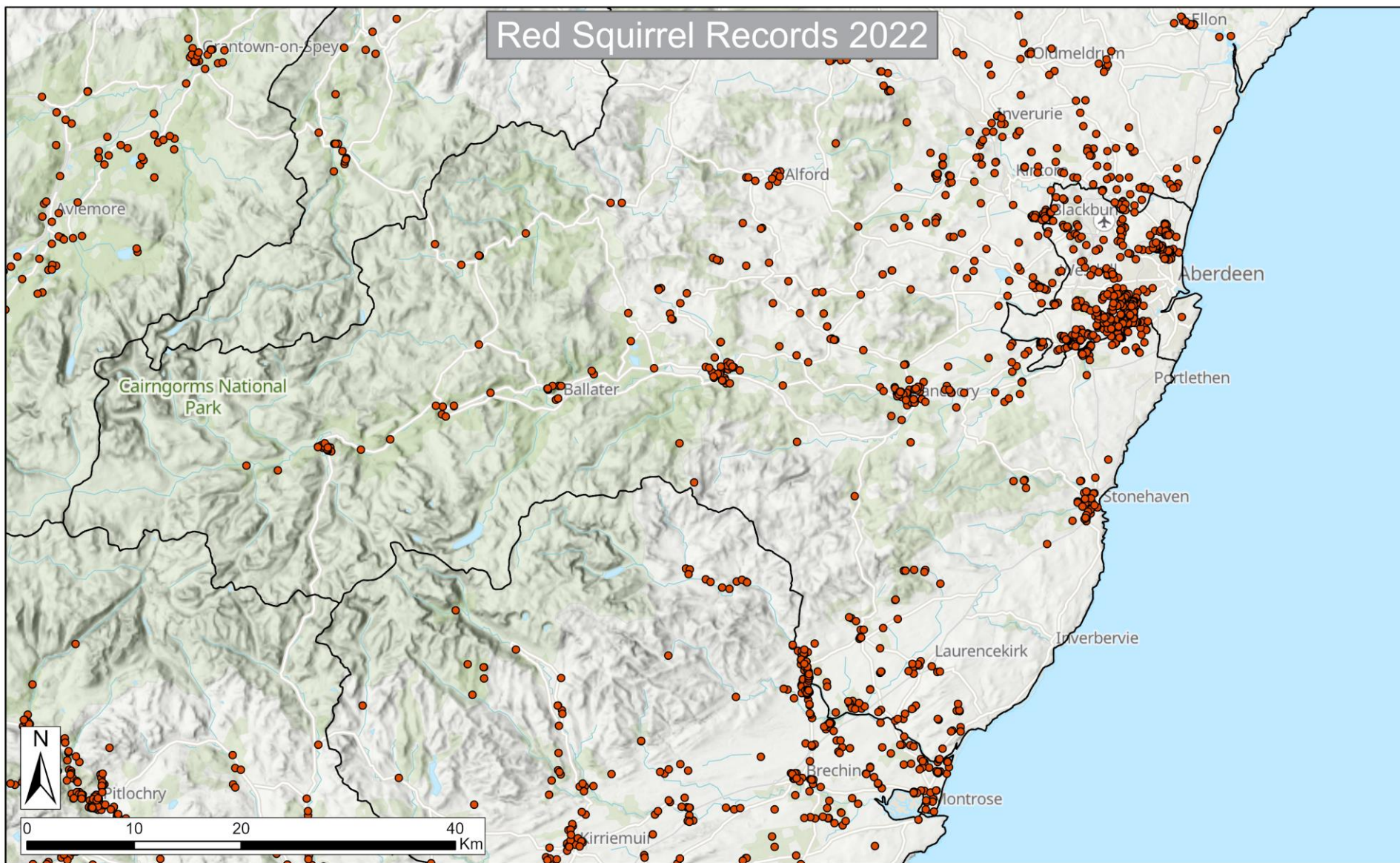
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Local Authority  
Boundaries

Grey Squirrel  
Records 2022



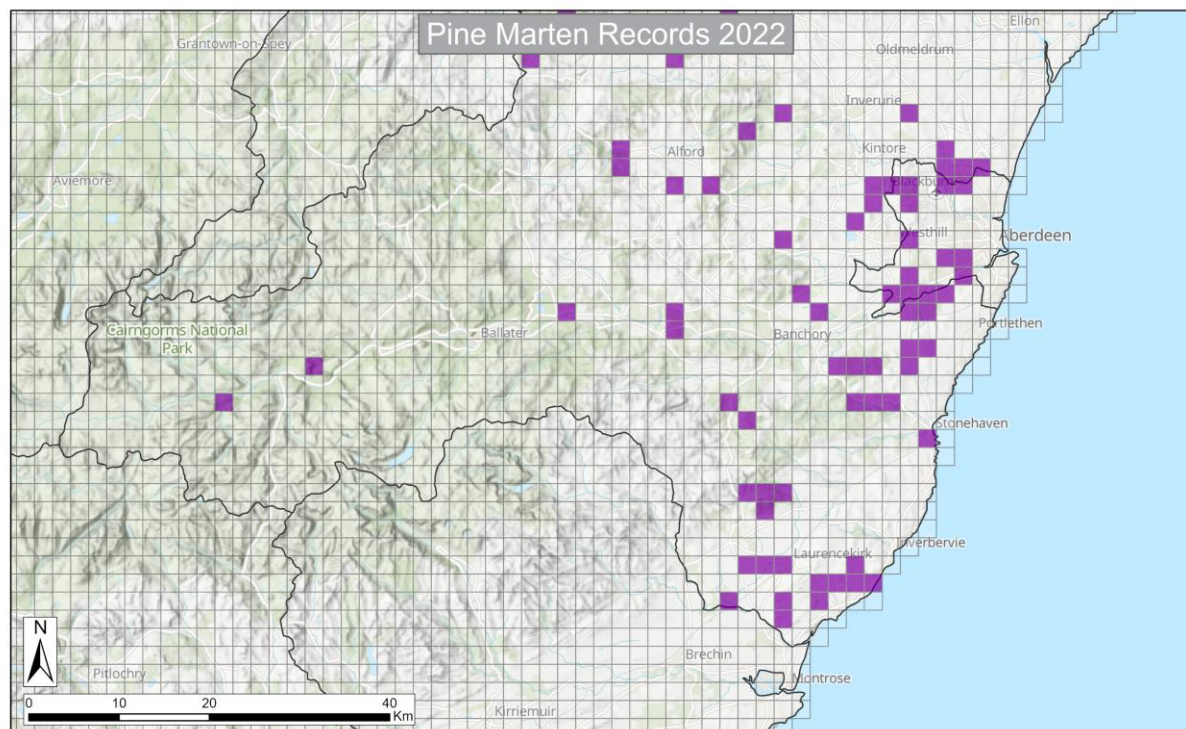




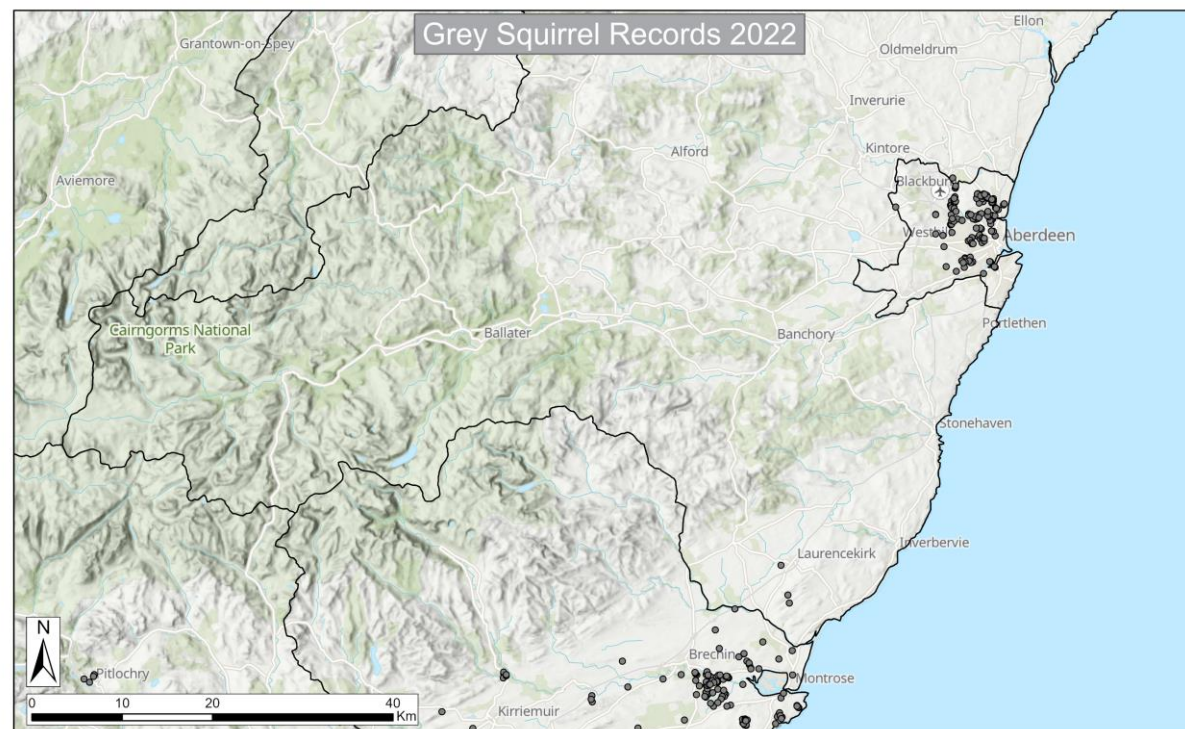


# Pine marten recovery in 2022

## NESBREC pine marten records 2022



## grey squirrel records 2022





# Summary

- **SSRS project in “Transition Phase”**
  - Current delivery of support, control & monitoring will change in March 2024
  - Working with statutory agencies, local authorities & project partners
- **NE Eradication**
  - Late stages of “Removal Phase”
  - Additional methods of detection and removal needed
    - Thinking “outside the box”
    - Upskilling
  - Increased public awareness of our goal is needed
  - A lot has been achieved
  - Still a lot left to do.....

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#### PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

#### FUNDER

- **A special thanks to**

- The NE Team
- Survey volunteers
- Trap loan volunteers
- Landowners
- Aberdeen city council & FLS
- Devin Fitzpatrick & UHI team

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