

WALLACE LAUNCHES COFORD REPORT ON IRELAND'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

9 October, 2007

Ms. Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, today officially launched the COFORD report on *“Sustaining and Developing Ireland’s forest genetic resources – an outline strategy”* in the Botanic Gardens, Dublin.

Welcoming the Report, Minister of State Wallace pointed out *“Forest genetic resources are fundamental to everything in commercial forestry in Ireland and in conserving our native trees and forests. Good quality genetic material is vital for the grower and landowner. It provides the right start for farmers and others getting involved in forestry and will bring rewards in higher yields and better quality timber”*. She added that COFORD, UCD and her Department in co-operation with Coillte and Teagasc are working hard with the forest nursery sector to ensure that growers have top quality plants, based on the right genetic material to get forests off to the right start.

The Minister of State outlined that there are a number of strands involved in providing high quality plants for new forests and in conserving native trees. Noting that many of these issues are interrelated and benefit from having an overall approach, with shared aims and objectives, she congratulated the authors for *“collaborating and putting together an excellent report, one that for the first time addresses forest genetic resources in an integrated fashion”* adding that *“the Report contains well considered, practical recommendations that provide a basis for where the sector should go over the period to 2013”*.

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Launch of Coford Report On Irish Squirrel Survey

9 October, 2007

Ms. Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, today officially launched the COFORD report on "The Irish Squirrel Survey 2007" in the Botanic Gardens, Dublin.

Launching the report, Minister of State Wallace commented *"Not only does forestry provide us with economic, social, recreational and environmental benefits, it also fulfils the basic role of providing a habitat for a lot of animals such as squirrels. While this is part and parcel of nature, we need to understand what threats such animals pose for the forestry and its commercial viability".* The Minister of State welcomed the Report stating *"The Irish Squirrel Survey 2007 is therefore a useful and timely publication, given the need to not only prevent the grey squirrel from causing serious damage to our commercial broadleaved woodlands, and indeed amenity and urban wood lands but to address the conservation of our native red squirrel".*

She added *"The survey shows red squirrel numbers declining as a result of the spread of the grey. The survey also provides a very good basis for targeted measures to restore red squirrel populations" and referred to a pilot project currently being undertaken, with funding from her Department, on the protection of the broadleaf estate and matters relating to the red and grey squirrels.*

The Minister of State also thanked everybody who took the time to respond to the Squirrel survey, and the many organisations, both statutory and voluntary, which contributed to the compilation of the report.

SQUIRREL SURVEY: Irish squirrel survey 2007

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: Dr Michael Carey

OBJECTIVES

- * To update the records regarding the geographical distributions of red and grey squirrels in Ireland.
- * To generate up-to-date maps of these geographical distributions.
- * To identify recent changes in their respective distributions via comparison with previous surveys.
- * To develop a survey methodology and data collation system that will facilitate the subsequent addition of new records without the need for entirely new large-scale surveys in the future.
- * To relate distribution patterns and changes to the presence of pine martens.
- * To promote red squirrel conservation and educate people on the threat posed by the grey through directly involving the general public with the survey.

The Irish Squirrel Survey 2007

carried out in association with

An Taisce, Birdwatch Ireland, The Central Fisheries Board, Coillte, Countryside Alliance, CRANN, ESI Ireland, The Forest Service, The Golfing Union of Ireland, The Irish Deer Society, The Irish Farmer's Association, The Irish Landowners Association, ISPCA, The Irish Timber Growers Association, The Irish Tree Society, The Irish Wildlife Trust, NARGC, NPWS, The Society of Irish Foresters, Teagasc, The Tree Council, The Wild Deer Association and Woodlands of Ireland.

Further Reading

Recent changes in the distribution of red squirrels in Northern Ireland

<http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/report.pdf>

Sciurus carolinensis

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/invasive/species.asp?item=5109>

Links

<http://www.irishsquirrelsurvey.com/>

<http://www.squirrelweb.co.uk/>

<http://www.ucd.ie/bioenvsci/mammal/>

[http:// www.redsquirrels.info/](http://www.redsquirrels.info/)

<http://www.wwbic.org.uk/redsquirrelproject/>

[http:// www.pontelandredsquirrels.co.uk/](http://www.pontelandredsquirrels.co.uk/)

[http:// www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org/](http://www.europeansquirrelinitiative.org/)

[http:// www.ptes.org/](http://www.ptes.org/)