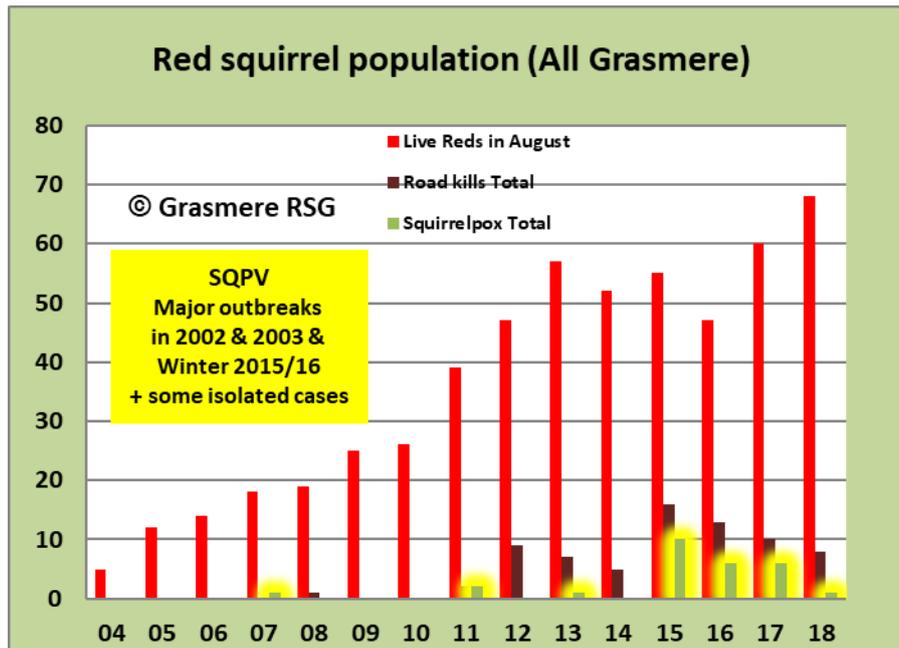


Grasmere Red Squirrels Update & 2018 Summary 19/1/19

News of the reds

Our reds did well in 2018 and continue to do so. In September a family of 5 was seen by a visitor in the churchyard and very young squirrels were seen around Grasmere in late October. The annual population survey has shown an increase in numbers to 68 (60 in 2017).

Compared to 2017, in 2018 there have been increases in the number of reds in Easedale (especially Lancrigg), Hollens, central village and small reductions at Tongue Gill and Red Bank.



However, the unprecedented number of greys this autumn means that the reds were in great danger of contracting the squirrelpox virus and indeed this did happen. There were 2 deaths due to squirrelpox during 2018. One on 3/1/18 at Town End which was the tail end of an outbreak which started in November 2017. The second was on 30/10/18 at Greenhead and was sent for analysis which confirmed it was squirrelpox.

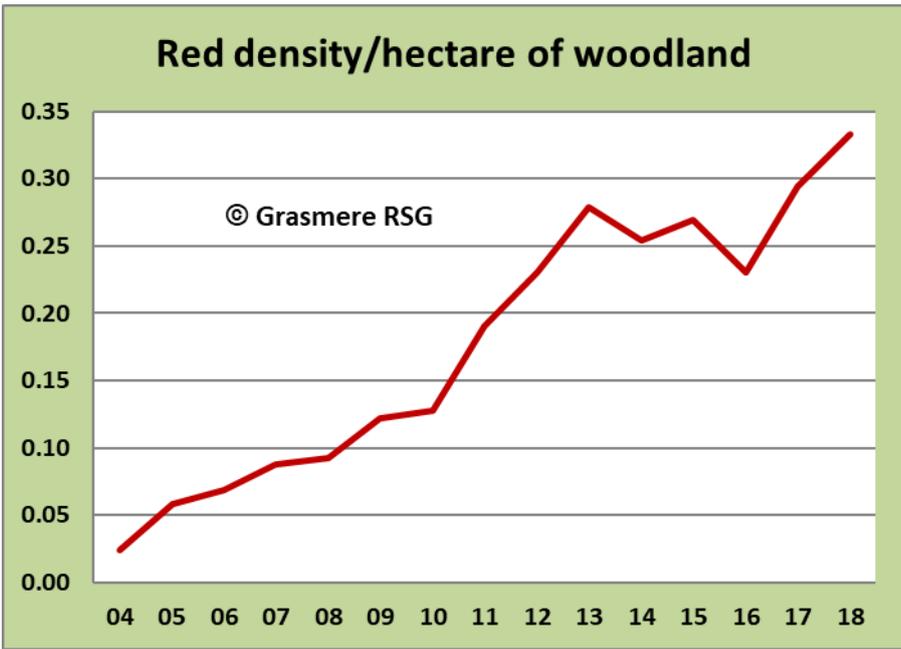
No more cases of pox that we know of since. However one lethargic red was seen at The Wyke in October, one at The Hollens in November and one at Town End in December. In each case healthy reds have been seen since at each location. Of course, more reds could have died and we just haven't seen the bodies. We must all continue to be vigilant and look for signs of lesions on eyes and lips and general lethargy.

There were two other dead reds found which weren't caused by the pox.

In 2018 there were 8 road deaths (10 in 2017, 13 in 2016 and 16 in 2015).

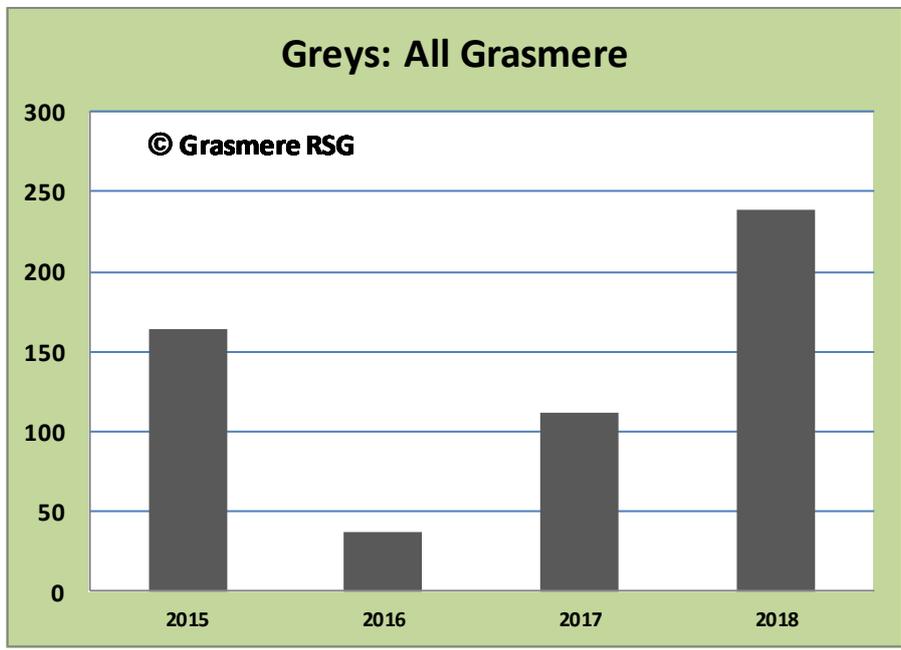
The density of reds obviously increases with the population. The graph below shows the overall density in Grasmere (number of reds/hectare).

The current density isn't too high – the main reference: 'The Eurasian Red Squirrel' Bosch and Lurz 2012, says that densities range up to 0.9 (deciduous) and 1.6 (coniferous) per ha. For Grasmere, which is mainly deciduous, a figure of 1/hectare seems to be a reasonable top end.



Greys

2018 has been the worse year for greys since our clear-out in 2009. There has been an exceptionally high number of greys in the Northern part of the area.



The reason for the large increase in greys isn't known but most other parts of Cumbria have had increases over last year compared to 2017.

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