The PET OWNERS Info Sheet

Angus SQUIRREL GROUP

"The Trouble with Tiddles"

Everyone loves their pets for the companionship and enjoyment that they give. However, it is a sad fact that domestic cats play a significant part in causing red squirrel deaths in urban and sub-urban areas. If you have red squirrels visiting your garden and keep a cat there are some things that you can do reduce the risks.

Treat your cat to a new collar, fitted with a bell. This might just give squirrels enough warning to get away.

Make sure that your cat is fed well and regularly. A hungry cat is a threat to wildlife.

Think about keeping your cat indoors more often during March/April & July/August when the squirrels are breeding.

Bringing your cat indoors at night means that they will not be about when squirrels are active at first light in the summer.

If you plan to feed red squirrels, make sure that the feeder is out of reach for cats.

Report any strays that you see on the prowl.

"Come Back Rover!"

A walk in the woods is great fun for dogs and owners alike. It keeps them fit and provides all the pleasures of the outdoors. However it is important to remember that you are sharing the area with the animals that live there all of the time.

You should never allow your dog to chase squirrels even though it may seem harmless. Squirrels spend a great deal of time and effort foraging for food. Being chased wastes energy that has to be made up, which is especially hard to do in the winter months. It also causes stress, which may have a bad effect on their ability to breed.

Extra attention must be paid during breeding months (see above) as females under threat may be forced to abandon their dreys and move their kittens elsewhere putting them under unnecessary threat. At this time it is best to keep dogs on a short lead while in a squirrel populated area.

Further advice on dog walking can be found in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code leaflet WALKIES (call SNH on 01738 444177).