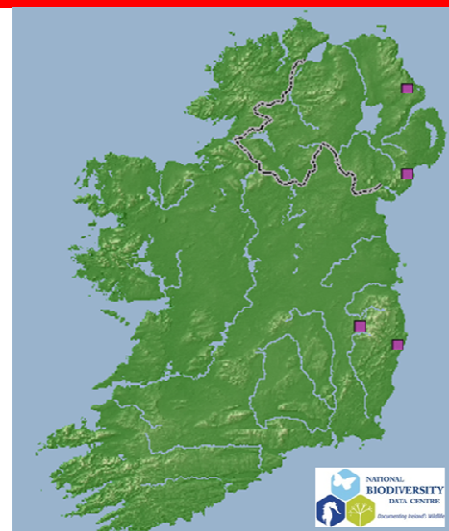


ALERT!

Squirrel pox virus



Supplied via GB NNS



Squares are approximate of sighting locations

Invasive species alert for: Squirrel pox virus

Why the concern? Squirrel pox virus is a potentially fatal disease currently affecting red squirrel populations in some areas in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Squirrel pox virus is highly pathogenic to red squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and is a significant contributing factor to their local extinction where infection is present and widespread in grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) populations. The grey squirrel is by-and-large unaffected by this virus. The grey squirrel is an invasive species in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

What does it look like? A red squirrel that contracts the disease will suffer the following symptoms:

- lesions and scabs with swelling;
- skin ulcers;
- discharge around the eyes, mouth feet and genitalia;
- increasing lethargy as the disease progresses.

Infected animals are said to resemble rabbits with myxomatosis, in that they are sometimes found shivering and lethargic. Death normally follows in under 14 days from infection.

Where might I see it? Infected animals will most likely be seen in the areas they inhabit, on the ground and at the base of trees.

What should I do if I think I see a diseased squirrel? If you suspect that you have seen a case of squirrel pox virus infection please report it immediately with location details, date seen, by whom and a photograph if possible.

For more information or to report any sightings please email
invasives@biodiversityireland.ie or visit
<http://invasivespeciesireland.com>



www.invasivespeciesireland.com



Report Sightings