

# Grizedale

## Grizedale Red Kite Re-introduction Project

A plan to establish a viable population of Red Kites in the South Lakeland area of Cumbria and the North West of England.

### Introduction

Red Kites are a stunning bird of prey, similar in size to a buzzard, which were once widespread across the UK. In the past, Red Kites would have been found scavenging around every village and town in the country, before numbers dropped to such an extent that they became extinct in England and Scotland in the nineteenth century. Only a small population remained in mid Wales.

Since 1989, the Red Kite has been successfully re-introduced or translocated to eight widely spread locations throughout England and Scotland to enable the species to recolonise its former range, for the first time in over one hundred years. The Grizedale re-introduction project aims to actively encourage the Red Kite to continue its expansion across its former range and it is anticipated that this project will help substantially in increasing the rate of spread of the Red Kite population into all of the formerly occupied UK range.

Re-introduction of young Red Kites into Grizedale forest will commence in June 2010, for a three year period.

### Why Grizedale?

- Historical evidence that red kites were present in the area
- Natural barriers such as the Solway and the Pennines limit natural colonisation
- Land use in and around Grizedale is highly suitable for red kites
- Buzzards are widespread in the area with good survival rates, implying suitable conditions for Red Kites
- Geographically, Cumbria is the most obvious and largest area where Red Kites are still absent

# Grizedale

## Aims & Objectives

- To establish a productive, breeding population of Red Kites in Grizedale, South Cumbria by 2015.
- To increase the rate of Red Kite range expansion in North West England and link up with existing populations in Wales, Yorkshire, North East England and South West Scotland and so increase the chances of a continuous geographic range.
- To develop community involvement and create educational opportunities arising from the scheme.

For further information, please contact

Iain Yoxall  
Project Manager

01229 862014  
07867 501391

[iain.yoxall@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:iain.yoxall@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

# Grizedale

## Questions & Answers

### **Why do we need to re-introduce Red Kites?**

*Re-introducing Red Kites will enable the species to recolonise areas from which it disappeared many years ago, speeding up a process which could take many decades to occur naturally.*

### **What do they eat?**

*Almost any type of animal **carrion** is taken, live prey is limited to invertebrates and creatures weak enough to be overpowered by a bird not noted for its strength. They pose no threat to livestock.*

### **How do they interact with other species?**

*Competition with Common Buzzards and Ravens exists throughout the Red Kite's range. This is entirely natural and is not deemed to be a problem.*

### **How many birds will be released and when?**

*Approximately 90 birds will be released over a 3-year period, this equates to approximately 30 birds per annum and will begin during the summer of 2010.*

### **Does this mean more visitors?**

*The re-introduction of Red Kites presents an excellent opportunity to educate and inform visitors about Red Kites and wider environmental issues. In a national context, Red Kites are becoming a relatively common sight so an increase in visitor numbers in peak periods is not anticipated.*

### **How is the project funded?**

*The project is funded jointly by the Forestry Commission and external sponsorship.*

### **Will they predate ground-nesting birds?**

*Carrion is the preferred food source of red kites and as such ground nesting birds occur in their diet only infrequently, occurring usually when red kites are feeding dependent young.*

### **Will they have any impact on livestock?**

# Grizedale

Red kites will not have any impact upon livestock, although as carrion feeders, it is expected that they will feed upon fallen stock.