

## **4 CRISIS Methodology – Promoting red squirrel conservation**

At an early stage in the project it became apparent that any practical attempts to directly protect red squirrel populations in the field would be logistically outside the remit of the project team. Focus therefore shifted to how best to promote red squirrel conservation on a wider basis through an advisory capacity with several of the key stakeholders affected by the need to conserve red squirrels. Conservation in this regard is also directly connected with education and public awareness; the project team's approach to raising the level of publicity surrounding the threat posed to the red squirrel is dealt with in Section 5.5.

### **4.1 Involvement in the development of the All-Ireland Red Squirrel Species Action Plan**

A draft All Ireland Species Action Plan (SAP) for the conservation of red squirrel was circulated by National Parks and Heritage Service in the Republic of Ireland (NPWS) and the Environment and Heritage Service, Northern Ireland (EHS) for consultation in 2006. The CRISIS team was requested by COFORD to comment on the draft SAP. The CRISIS team engaged in a consultation process with Coillte and held two successful workshops with approximately 40 participants in February 2007. The purpose of the workshops was to obtain views on issues raised in the SAP and, in particular, on practical actions that might be taken to advance the conservation of the red squirrel without unnecessarily compromising forest management.

The workshops featured presentations by Dr Colin Lawton, NUI Galway, Dr Ferdia Marnell, NPWS, Dr Michael Carey and Mr. Geoff Hamilton. The workshops' outcomes formed the basis of the CRISIS report on the draft SAP to COFORD. The findings of the ongoing squirrel survey and public education in relation to red and grey squirrels were seen as key elements of the SAP.

### **4.2 Input into FEPS**

The project team was invited by the Forest Service for input into the grant documentation for the 2008 re launch of FEPS, in relation to red squirrel conservation. The document was reviewed and several suggestions were forwarded to the Forest Service including how some

habitats may be improved for red squirrels, or at least minimize the degree to which grey squirrels hold an advantage over red squirrels therein. Further information is provided in Section 8.2