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Squirrel Hunting



- stalking squirrels
- squirrel calls
- shooting squirrels in the woods
- various expert reviews

Stalking Squirrels

Graham Allen's anti-squirrel campaign gets off to a flying start





Grey squirrels were first brought into this country in the 19th Century from North America and kept as exotic pets, unfortunately some escaped into the wild and since then they've been breeding at an alarming rate and have spread out into the majority of the British Isles. They've not been content with taking over the habitat of our native red squirrels, they've also passed on the deadly squirrel pox to their smaller cousins, whilst remaining immune to it themselves – nice! I appreciate there's not actually been any malice involved and that the greys have just done what's natural, but they couldn't have done a better job of decimating red numbers if they'd tried.

Greys can also do something that reds can't, and that's eat and digest acorns; when you consider how many oak trees there are in this country, it's hardly surprising that these invaders have done so well. They'll also eat buds forming on trees in the spring and strip bark all year, so are a major pest in managed and natural woodland. They don't really have many predators, so all in all, it's obvious why they've done so well.

As a non-native species, they've been tolerated for far too long, but your average UK resident just sees them as rather cute, clever little fellows that are fun to watch and feed peanuts to in parks. There are organisations that have been set up to control their numbers, but it really needs a concerted, national programme to have any real impact on numbers. Air rifles are a very effective pest control tool and are ideal for dealing with tree-dwelling rodents and I've always had of policy of killing as many as I can whilst out shooting, despite their fluffy tails and clever ways. The golf course I shoot on had a plague of them a couple of years ago, but they're not there now! I can remember one particular sortie as if it were yesterday…

The fight-back; some serious control required

It all started on a very bright, February morning, just before sunrise. I'd got up at some ungodly hour to be set up ready for action, because golfers just love to be out as early as possible in the morning - they must be mad, a bit like us shooters. I had a window of about 90 minutes to tackle as many greys as possible, so my usual, lazy approach wouldn't be possible. I prefer a slow, leisurely stalk through a wood when squirreling (if that's the word for it) picking off targets as they appear. On this trip however I had to get my skates on if I was to get anything in the bag.

I was at that time testing a .22 calibre BSA T-10 pre-charged pneumatic with a Weihrauch silencer, topped with a Hawke 6-18 X 44 scope with an SR12 ballistic reticule.



I'd done my homework on the range and using JSB pellets I had aim points from 10 to 55 yards. I obviously wouldn't be shooting live quarry at 55 yards, but it's always nice to know your point of impact. I'd fixed a Harris bipod to the stud fitted to the BSA's forend, as if possible, I take shots prone. I didn't think I'd be using it much, but you never know how things might turn out and it was folded up out of the way should I need it.

I set off from the clubhouse car park and made my way down to the beech trees at the bottom of the valley. I'd seen plenty of squirrels there on my recce visit the week before (when the place was also crawling with golfers) so I knew I'd soon encounter a tree rat or two. I was in luck as there were three scampering around, with two chasing each other round a tree trunk. They soon got bored and stopped, so I decided to tackle the easier shot first. I was using a laser rangefinder and a quick zap with it showed my target to be just under 30 yards, the range I'd zeroed at. It was simply a case of settling the main aimpoint of the SR reticle on the side of the squirrel's head behind its eye. The JSB hit perfectly for the T10's first kill. The Weihrauch silencer had done a good job quietening the report, but the pellet's impact had disturbed the other two and they stopped dead still, one on the side of a trunk looking at me. He too was a simple shot at 25 yards. The third potential target then vanished into a hole in the side of a tree – safe… for now anyway.

My next kill was a squirrel flattened against a branch half way up a tree, but he soon came tumbling down. I carried on through the trees until I saw another squirrel in the distance and managed to get within 45 yards without being seen. I obviously wanted to get closer for the shot, so edged forwards using the trees as cover. My quarry was digging around in the leaf litter, so every time he had his head down, I moved a bit closer. A kneeling shot braced against a tree from 30 yards put him in the bag too. Maybe shooting something in the back of the head's a bit unsporting, but this wasn't sport – it was pest comtrol.

Moving on up

Nothing else appeared, so I made my way up to another group of trees on the far side of the course. As I walked across the fairway, I could see two more squirrels on the ground near the base of a large oak tree. They weren't bothered by my rather too hasty approach, but I was over-confident and they ran into a clump of smaller trees. They obviously felt safe here, as they started chasing each other like the earlier two. At one point they actually ran towards me and I couldn't believe my luck when one stood about 10 yards away from where I was crouching. It was blurred through the scope, but a quick twist of the objective lens soon sorted that. Ten yards isn't exactly a taxing shot, so this one made number 5. His mate was stupid enough to stick around and he was shot at an equally amazingly close range of 7 yards. I was over the moon with the way things had worked out, but it wasn't over yet. Another long stalk put another one down at 20 yards, but there was to be one more, this time with an audience!

I'd met up with my mate who'd asked me to help out with the vermin control and he'd just noticed a couple of golfers in the distance, so we decided to call it a day. We waved to them and they came down for a chat. One of them was the club captain and he was very pleased with my efforts, but as we were talking, I noticed another squirrel behind him about 100 yards away. I was put on the spot a bit when he said that I should see if I could get it, but I like a challenge, so off I went. I had to cover open ground to get within range and after some fairly rapid walking, ended up crawling about 40 yards through the dew. I'd got to within 30 yards and I finally got to use my bipod! I was glad that I'd fitted it, as I was puffing like a steam train by now. As the squirrel keeled over dead from a clinical brain shot I actually got a round of applause, now that's a first!

Quite a result

Eight squirrels in an hour and a half was rather pleasing to say the least, and subsequent visits put another dozen or so in the bag. I even took my moderated 12 bore shotgun with me on one trip and took out all the dreys in the valley; if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing properly. My efforts safeguarded the young trees that were planted that year, but I still get the occasional grey in my sights and they usually end up in my game bag. I've eaten squirrel before, but they normally end up as fox bait these days.

My anti squirrel campaign is an on-going affair and I shoot them whenever I can. If the county's shooters all do our bit we can make a serious dent on their numbers, but I think Joe Public will need educating before anything serious happens to tackle these destructive little rodents.



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Fruit Loving Criminals!

Pete Wadeson recalls a visit to an old orchard infested by grey squirrels and discovers a hive of activity…



The grey squirrel is a crafty and fascinating critter, but a pest nevertheless that will rob birds nests to steal eggs and kill chicks as well as causing damage to and even killing trees with its 'ring barking' antics.

A farm I shoot over was having trouble with the bushy tailed ones in a picturesque, traditional old orchard. The place where red current grows alongside apple and plum trees and in the far corner a hybrid pear tree, that produces a precious fruit known as the Hazel Pear or 'Hessle' as they're known locally in Lancashire. I'm told many years ago they were plentiful - it's a small variety of pear tree, grafted onto a Hawthorn bush and it makes for very good eating.

Getting in there

I've driven and walked past the orchard countless times on my way to various parts of the land that surrounds it and never realised what a lovely place was hidden behind the tall hedges and old stone walls that surround it. As I entered the 'haven' I soon saw bark stripped from trees and the remnants of gnawed and half eaten fruit strewn on the ground.

Once the 'fruit loving criminals' have had a go, they'd only take a portion – a generous one at that – but most was then left. Without a protective outer peel the fruit soon spoils. Making my way further into the orchard I was quickly surrounded by apple, pear and plum trees, all starting to ripen with many showing signs of the attentions of the unwanted greys.

I marvelled at the beauty and the mass of wildlife from bullfinches to a hedgehog I nearly tripped over intent itself on getting some fruit on the deck. It was nice to see the place was such a safe haven for all manner of wildlife. The only unwelcome guests being the troublesome greys...

It was clear not many shots were going to be taken from certain positions as the leaves stay on many fruit trees for quite a while into late autumn and beyond.

After a 'mooch' around, I stood under a large apple tree and used one of the commercially available squirrel calls. These I've mentioned before, simply shake or squeeze them to imitate virtually any noise similar to the commotion squirrels make when arguing over something such as food or territory. They've worked in the past for me, but this time nothing showed.

Got the hives

When squirrel shooting it's very much a quick fire all or nothing trip. One day you can go and see a lot of activity, at others it's as though there's nothing there. As I know the surrounding area and certainly after closer inspection my suspicions were confirmed that the squirrels aren't actually resident in the orchard but are visiting it to grab free meals. They travel from a relatively large piece of old woodland approximately a quarter of a mile away to visit the orchard – such is their liking for the rich, easy pickings there.

As I made my way slowly and stealthily around I caught a glimpse of another squirrel gnawing and clawing furiously at an apple larger than its own head! So engrossed in attacking the luscious looking fruit





it was a sitter of a shot – slightly outstretched but offering a full side on target. I carefully placed the cross hairs on the squirrel's head, no need for compensating for pellet trajectory changes at such relatively close range, and squeezed off a shot from the lightweight rifle/scope combo I was using. With apple peel still in its teeth it dropped out of the tree! Nothing difficult about that, but the situation was soon to change.

As I made my way to the centre of the orchard more than a few bees were around, I thought this strange until I walked right into the middle of a small clearing containing over half a dozen hives. My presence soon had them coming over to investigate me and this wasn't good news as I'd planned on sitting up within the area to sit and wait for the squirrels to show themselves. Needless to say with the potential of unwanted 'bee bothering', a new plan of attack was needed - and by accident was formulated.

From the outside in

During the time I'd spent skirting the trees I noticed quite a few Hazel Pears falling off the trees to land outside of the orchard. When I stood near a tree to disguise my outline waiting to catch a glimpse of the canny critters, I spotted one suddenly pop-up onto a gatepost in plain view. The shot was pretty much along the horizontal, so easily knocked it off its stone perch.

I made my way out of the orchard to retrieve the 'kill' and purely by accident sussed out the 'modus operendi' of these 'fruit-nabbing' squirrels. On the floor directly at the base of the gatepost was a pile of partially eaten pears. This built up at the base because they would sit on top holding the pear - eating in what then they thought was safety. A change of tactic was needed. This meant sitting up using a hedge as cover adjacent to the target zone and catch them out as they came to eat the fruit they took from anywhere from the trees or where they'd fallen.

The wood was clearly visible from my shooting position, and as I sat totally still, I could actually see squirrels come bounding all the way up the hedge line running up to the orchard to reach the fruit. I took a few right at the base of the gatepost but a couple where too quick to get a bead on and quickly did vertical take offs with their powerful hind legs giving them momentum to scramble up the stone face of the post. Here they'd sit on top holding the pear - eating in what they thought was safety until my lead surprise told them otherwise. This was a unique situation as they didn't get wary of the area as squirrels coming out of the wood obviously didn't know what was happening to those that had gone before.

With a tally of five retrievable squirrels and a couple lost in the dense undergrowth I dropped the squirrels near the gatepost, made my way back to the 4 X 4 to packed away my rifle before going back to pay a courtesy call on my host at the cottage – it's always good to have a good relationship with those that give you permission to shoot on their land.







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No Missed Calls

Pete Wadeson recalls a stalk in the woods when he realised that on the right day 'Squirrel Calls' really can work…





Though I've hunted extensively with various models of the now sadly discontinued BSA SuperTen, I'll always remember my first BB carbine version. During zeroing I was eager to get out in and around the small copse that I'd decided to pit the little 'blatter' of a rifle against the ever busy squirrel population it holds.

I teamed the rifle up with a BSA Catseye 1.5 – 4.5 X 32IR set in BSA ScopeMaster two-piece medium height mounts. This superb little compact optic is ideal for close to medium range hunting, an ideal squirrel and rat shooting scope you could say. Illuminated reticle, wide field of view and nifty pressurised switching system that quickly lets you set the brightness as well as turn the lit 'floating red cross' ret' on or off.

Squirrelly?

After quickly filling up the old style removable 10-shot magazine with .177 calibre Bisley Magnums I slipped it back into the left of the action and set off into the wood. As I stalked slowly along I paused frequently to watch and listen for anything 'squirrelly.' It's at times like these you notice if a 'rig' is wrong but I'm glad to say the combo is relatively light and certainly compact so no worries over carrying an unwieldy tool as you negotiate fallen branches and tree trunks.

I eventually spotted my first tree rat sitting high up on an old elm, chattering and making all sorts of commotion. Unfortunately there was nowhere to lean against without moving so I needed to take a freehand standing shot and quite quickly without moving position. This is where I appreciated the rifles handling attributes. For awkward upward angle shots rifles such as this fall nicely back into the shoulder to allow a good steady aim. I quickly slid the safety off and composed the shot and it was one down almost as quick as it took to say 'My New Beeza Pleaser.'

The next one spied was much more challenging as this had scented and certainly seen my approach and was bounding away in the tree canopy stopping intermittently to see if I was following. I never do and wonder why people 'chase squirrels' they see, believe me that's the last thing you should be doing. If they sense they're being pursued they'll just drop into the nearest hidey- hole above or below ground.



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Give'em a call

As I'd now come to an area where the squirrels have a small community, to the point there's a tree that has three dreys within six feet of each other. Yes squirrels at some times living in harmony with their neighbours – an unusual scenario but one that's not as uncommon as many believe. Its here I positioned myself facing the dreys, leaning on a handy fallen tree trunk and used my secret weapon the 'Squirrel Buster' from Primos calls.

The squirrel's got a large vocal range from chattering, barking to an almost unperceivable and hard to explain squeaks' to guttural growls and this call with practice imitates almost all. More often than not just sitting up or standing quietly after giving a few rattles of the call which you would class as 'chattering' can produce a sighting. Sure enough, a few shakes of the 'Buster' and scanning the branches above I noticed a squirrel bob its head over a cleft in a tree branch. Slowly raising the rifle I quickly placed the illuminated red cross reticle on the side of the squirrel's bonce and number two came tumbling to the deck.

The call comes with an instructional CD and I'd done a good job of learning the craft as a cupped the call and squeezed the lower bellows experimenting with the sounds it could produce. To my utter surprise I eventually attracted/intrigued a squirrel to the point it came down from the trees to cautiously come towards my quite exposed position. You guessed it, their inquisitiveness lead to its downfall at the wrong end of a Bisley Magnum. Now I was getting interested in this as I've never been one to rave over these types of call believing them gimmicky, so I publicly have to eat my words! I don't know what was fascinating me more, the range of calls, getting calls back to it or the fact squirrels would respond and leave the safety of the their dreys – very warily I must add - but come down to the leaf litter strewn woodland floor and very cautiously come towards me. They all stopped eventually but unluckily for them well within range of my 30-yd zero.





Coo-ey!

As I backtracked on myself I heard the distinct soft repetitive coo-ing call of a wood pigeon so froze where I stood to see if I could catch a glimpse of the silhouette of the bird or maybe a white wing bar or neck flash. Sure enough there it sat, facing away from me so not the easiest of shots. I carefully stalked forward using a large tree trunk to mask my approach and knelt to lean against a large fallen tree trunk to steady myself for what at first seemed a 40yd- 45yd shot. With the rifle now poised for launching a 'Biz Mag' I made another studied range guesstimate. Estimating it was nearer the 45-yd mark, I allowed approximately 1" for holdover, gently squeezed the trigger and smacked it clean in the head knocking it spinning sideways as it tumbled to the deck.

As the day's action had now seemingly ended, and as I was more than satisfied with my afternoon saunter, I called it a day. Four squirrels and a lone wood pigeon to the combo's credit, the bushy tails certainly bagged by my squeaking barking, chattering yet very effective squirrel call and the woodie testament that the BSA SuperTen BB Carbine PCP was a great compact and very accurate air rifle.

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Knock, Knock!

Pete Wadeson heads down to the Black Country to meet some friends from Sandwell Field Sports and recounts a time they went drey poking on a rather idyllic estate...



The traditional method of drey poking for grey squirrels is usually done with a shotgun but there are times when you don't want all that noise or lead shot smacking into the trees. So this method along with some good airgunners is the more sensitive solution!

My yearly poke is during autumn into winter and I'm accompanied by my mates Tony and Mick from Sandwell Field Sports. I'm fortunate to be invited to the better estates and farms that Tony Wall has permission on and some of the land down his way is airgun heaven!

Mark is the gamekeeper, and has little trouble sorting squirrels with a shotgun, but he's happy to let the lads enjoy some challenging sport helping sort the problem. Though the 12ft lb air rifle is more than up for the job, there's one drawback – you need the target to remain still long enough to take the shot. Even though I've shot with them on previous occasions, Tony briefed me on a few more tricks they'd thought up to stop a squirrel in its tracks when leaving the drey.

Location, Location, Location...

Mark led the way with lofting poles at the ready knowing exactly where to go, with Tony, Mick and me following. If you've no guide to the known dreys, always keep an eye on the woodland floor for sign like tracks in the loam, relatively deep small holes in the earth, gnawed fir cones or scratchings, all good indicators to the area being well inhabited by greys. Looking up is the only way to find the squirrels bulky home but again only experience can give you indication if it's a drey or a bird's nest.

The traditional method of pole man and shooter takes on a totally different twist. One man is still needed to manage the poles and after getting them carefully into position, 'knock' the drey. Carrying and assembling the sections of what are standard issue lofting poles is a job in itself, harder still is ensuring you've got enough height to reach the drey and certainly manoeuvring it through the upper branches into position isn't easy.

Also, the pole man should stand away from the tree so the leaves, debris and even dead branches that get dislodged don't fall on him. It's here where positioning is





most crucial as shooters need to ensure an arc of fire that covers as many possible escape routes a grey could use to exit its dwelling. Also take into consideration that on occasion they'll need to work together, one shooting to create confusion or diversion, in turn hopefully the squirrel will hesitate in one position long enough for the other to make the shot. Fast reflexes and accurate shooting are the name of the game here!

Variable exit

From my own experience I've noted that squirrels will sometimes leave the drey very lazily, and not as many think... they don't all come rocketing out. The reason for this I think is curiosity! However, they will leave much faster should the drey be lower to the ground – these are not the best to knock for the airgun hunter.

If pretty high up though, sometimes they'll stop within a few yards of the drey in plain view trying to suss out what has caused the disturbance. This is the time to take the shot as they soon head straight for the treetops clinging to the thinnest of branches disappearing far out of sight.

Clinical head shot

As nothing was home at the first we tried, we were soon taking up position at the second. When this was knocked a squirrel half trotted/bounded out along the main tree limb its home was attached to. A 'not stopper', as the lads call them, Mick had a pellet off within seconds to whistle past its route along the branch it was now on. This causes the hesitation the shooter needs and the gunner with the best sight picture should have composed the shot and nailed the squirrel within seconds. With fast action multi-shot air rifles being so commonplace, the first man could have stopped the squirrel and still got another shot off to kill it. Where he couldn't - and this did happen on the day – was when one squirrel stopped at the disturbance the pellet caused in the direction it was heading but did an immediate turn to head the opposite way to which it came.

Then clearly seeing Mark's beaming white face down below and still moving the poles to create movement it even stopped and chattered in anger as it thought it was safe from the unwanted visitor. With a clear view, this was my chance which I took without hesitation whacking a Bisley Magnum into its tough noggin for a clean, clinical dispatch. In all I think that day as a team we broke the dozen so it had been a productive day, certainly a worthwhile and enjoyably sporting way of dealing with what is arguably the most numerous non-native species pest that inhabits our beautiful woodlands.



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Magical Mixed Bag

Andy Watkins went out for some squirrels and came back with just about every airgun quarry species possible

It was one of the nicest days of the year so far and I was at work, itching to get out in the field. The gamekeeper (John) had told me previously that I did not have long before the pheasants would be arriving at the shoot and I would have to limit where I was able to shoot. He also said he'd seen a large increase in the number of grey squirrels. The young ones were all emerging from their dreys at this time of year and starting to explore the woodland. They are not as edgy as the parents, which can sometimes make them easier targets, so this was the ideal time to knock a few down before they grow up and start doing some real damage! It made sense that I made an impact before the new arrival of the birds and all the hoppers. As soon as 5 O'clock came, I was out of the door like a flash. I sprinted home, grabbed my gun, pellets, a camo top and range finder.

Shooting light

I made record time and arrived at the farm in half an hour, so there was still plenty of light and hopefully, plenty of targets. On my way down the drive, I always load up a magazine and have the rifle ready to go out the car window. I know what opportunities can come up when heading down to the shoot and I know how frustrating it is not to be prepared. It's a good job I had everything ready on this occasion.





I slowly approached a large oak tree. One benefit of my little Fiat Panda is having a large sunroof, so the field of view is not limited to four windows and the windscreen. I could see no activity on the approach; however, when I was directly underneath, looking up through the sun roof, I noticed a flash of grey darting around the other side of the tree. Stopping the car and trying to silently and slowly open the door, I slipped out and gently rested the Air Arms S410 .177 on the roof, hoping to use it as a stable shooting platform. I waited there for a minute or two but saw nothing. Not wanting to let the chance go to waste, I stalked round the other side of the tree.

Good guess

Squirrels normally just play hide-and-seek, usually running to whichever side of the tree I am not, this one just bolted and headed for the hills! Unfortunately for him, he stopped to have one last curious look before it waved me goodbye for good. There was a small gap in-between all the branches, just big enough for a shot. I took no time in deciding whether or not to take it. The rifle was up and the squirrel was down within a few short seconds. I didn't have time to use the range finder, so guessed it at 35 yards. The retrieve was easy. The wood was mainly pine with little vegetation on the ground due to the lack of floor light. I hoped that this was the start to a good day.

Getting back in the car with one squirrel already under my belt, I drove a little further. I could barely believe my eyes when there were three more sat in on the outskirts of the drive, chewing on pine cones just 70 yards from where I had just stopped. Luckily, the gun was ready to go out the window, a quick pop with the range finder to find the nearest one was at a comfortable 45 yards (1 mill

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dot and a half for me). A quick cycle of the bolt and I had the rifle on aim. The squirrel was sat on the dusty track now, almost bolt upright with the pine cone in its claws. I gently released the shot and watched it in the scope, the pellet struck him in the head, passed through and created a small splash as it impacted the dry ground behind. The two squirrels behind soon scarpered, leaving number two lying where he was hit. He went in the game bag and I parked up, still wondering if this could be the bumper day I had never really had?

Birds galore

The sun was shining through the trees and the song birds were out in force. There were woodpeckers, thrushes, and nuthatches seemingly everywhere; it was a joy to just be out amongst it all. A job still had to be done though, so I continued my journey, keeping an eye out for anything that could be an opportunity. John had told me that he would like any kind of corvid, such as jackdaws, jays and crows shot, due to the damage that they do to the farm and wildlife. I had never shot a jay before, they have always been far too twitchy to get a shot off.

Today was different though. A jay was around. I could hear it. They must have the most undignified screech out of all of the animals in the wood, you can hear them from a mile way, yet often not see them when they are just metres away. I saw this one flying in and crouched down in an attempt to avoid its razor sharp eyesight. I had a tree behind me, it landed well within range and seemed to be unaware of my presence. I crept over to the willow that I was just yards away from and used it as a support, desperately not wanting to cock the shot up.

The jay was bobbing its head up and down and would not keep still. I could see where I needed to place the pellet, right in the engine room. The bird was at a steep incline and I knew it would be an 'on crosshair' shot. Once more I squeezed the crisp trigger on the 410 and the silenced shot solidly impacted. It surprised me how little noise it made when it hit the floor, unlike a pigeon for example. Picking it up, it soon became clear why. It was extremely light and felt like it was made of feathers alone. It seemed a shame to me that something so light and frankly, quite beautiful could be so destructive to song birds. I plucked out the brightest feathers, as these could be used to make flies for fishing and continued on.



Targets galore

I must have walked for over a mile and there was activity everywhere and lots more pellets released, which landed on their intended targets. This was by far the best day's shooting (numbers wise) I had ever had. With six squirrels in the bag, I was walking along the side of a wood with a moulded potato field to my left. There was a pigeon that had flown in approximately 50 yards into the wood and was just sat on a wide open branch. I could have taken the shot standing but wanted to make the most of my surrounding environment, so settled in an unusual position sat in a furrow with my back leant on the ridge on the field's edge. From this surprisingly comfortable and very stable position, I could place 2 mill-dots on the pigeon's head with ease and it dropped with little drama.

With the bag continuing to fill, I was feeling good. I did miss a few though. I won't pretend that I was on 100%. Everyone misses and on this day I missed four if I remember correctly. I continued through the coppices and the level of high activity remained. I was shooting squirrels in every patch of wood I entered. John was right, there was a heck of a lot!! I made my way up to a piece of woodland on a small hillock, the sun was getting a little lower in the sky now and I was keen to see what I might shoot on this final patch.

The final patch

I was walking the outskirts anti clockwise, this gave me the best angles to shoot into the wood. I could see some pheasant feeders in the darkness of the trees and what looked like yet another squirrel. Not this time. It was a large rat. I put the gun on aim and went for a heart shot. I missed the heart and ended up wounding it, not what I like to do. Being fat and wounded it was pretty slow, so luckily I was able to get a follow up shot and put an end to it.

With the light now gone and no night vision on me, I called it a day with the final count being 10 squirrels, a jackdaw, jay, pigeon, two rats and a rabbit caught in the headlights on the drive back up the track. John was very pleased that the pheasants and feeders would have a little less trouble from the greys and he recently commented on the drastic reduction on greys in the woods. He seems sure that I am having a positive impact and that's good news as far as I am concerned. It's always good to hear that our work as air gunners is appreciated and makes a difference.

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