Written evidence submitted by Bernadette Collins

I have signed the petition to make grey squirrels exempt from the invasive species order because they are wrongly accused of these points:

They are blamed for the squirrel pox in red squirrels and for their decline. The fact is that only 2% of causes of this is to blame and the other 98% is made up of deforestation, traffic, cats and dogs, natural deaths and other diseases. People have short memories and forget that at the turn of the 20th century over 100,000 red squirrels were deemed as pests and slaughtered. And that you could obtain a hunting licence to kill reds right up until 1970. Humans have taken away the habitats that reds live in. Reds cannot live the urban life like a grey can.

Grey’s get blamed for destroying trees but who is responsible for deforestation and building new housing estates? I don’t see many grey squirrels driving JCBs and using cement mixers do you? They actually plant more trees as they forget where they bury seeds and nuts.

Another lie and myth is that greys kill birds ....cats are more responsible for killing our UK songbirds than squirrels. Both reds and greys may steal the odd egg because they are curious but believe me they prefer nuts.

The way the grey squirrel is being wrongly persecuted is disgusting behaviour by all those involved and red squirrel lovers are setting traps up to kill greys in areas that reds can’t live because this government have brainwashed them with lies when the real reason is humans made a mistake years ago so decided to blame the ‘alien’ species. Imagine if we branded people as alien or invasive then world war 3 would break out. How dare humans take away habitats and cull innocent animals regardless of species just to suit their greedy needs.

Leave the grey squirrels alone and concentrate on more important issues. Those who call it control are wrong. It’s murder. Grey’s are our friends and have every right to live their lives here where they have been for almost 150 years. They are native by birth but condemned by origin!

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