

SQUIRRELS!



Eastern Gray Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*):

Native to Eastern North America, *S. carolinensis* live in woodland areas with trees providing winter-storable foods, commonly found in urban or suburban areas. Considered one of the world's worst invasive species, they have dispersed and colonized throughout the US and Europe. In autumn, squirrels forage on seed bearing trees. In winter, squirrels forage from supplementary food sources from humans, such as bird feeders.



Black Squirrels

DNA analysis has shown that Black squirrels are the same species as Eastern gray squirrels, with a gene variant thought to come from interbreeding of Eastern gray squirrels and fox squirrels. It has been hypothesized that deforestation of old growth forests made it more challenging for melanistic squirrels to find camouflage from predators and hunters. Black squirrels are more common in urban than rural settings, as well as cold and northern latitudes. Black squirrels are easier to spot than gray squirrels on road surfaces, which could be an evolutionary advantage to avoid being hit by vehicles in urban settings.

Squirrel Control, Management, and Eradication

People accustomed to seeing squirrels in parks may reject efforts to control populations, especially if control means trapping and killing them.

Management methods include:

- Removal
- Relocation
- Habitat modification
- Live traps
- Euthanasia
- Surgical sterilization



Are "Black" Squirrels More Aggressive?

Unconscious bias from racist stereotypes persists. There is a folk belief that black squirrels are more aggressive with higher testosterone levels than other color morphs. The Daily Mail referred to Black squirrels as "the testosterone-charged black is fitter, faster and more fiercely competitive than both reds or greys"; "have left the grey squirrel population in fear." There is no scientific evidence that suggests the black variant makes squirrels more inherently aggressive than gray squirrels.