



Eastern Gray Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

Gray squirrels can be found in yards, neighborhoods and woods all year long.

The eastern gray squirrel is predominantly gray with a white underbelly, although some brownish colored fur may occur as well. The tail is large and bushy. There are white and black color variations of the eastern gray squirrel.

Gray squirrels eat lots of things including tree bark and buds, nuts (like acorns, hickory and walnuts), seeds. If you have a bird feeder out between December 1 and April 1 when black bears are least active, you may see gray squirrels raiding the bird feeders.

Eastern gray squirrels store their food in caches, hidden throughout their habitat, so that they can feast on it at a later time.

Gray squirrels build nests in trees. These nests are called dreys and are made of leaves and sticks. They are oval and are often lined with moss and feathers to help prevent heat loss. Gray squirrels may breed twice a year, having on average 1-4 young per litter.

Predators of eastern gray squirrels include owls, hawks, humans, raccoons, cats and dogs.

Gray squirrels have many different sounds that they make. They are very social using both sounds and body language to send messages. Go online and listen to squirrel sounds, then go outside and listen for squirrels near you!



Ask A Naturalist

Did you know that eastern gray squirrels are great liars? If they think another animal is watching, they will pretend to bury their food in a cache. They will dig a hole, pretend to put something in it, cover it back up to hide it and scamper away. And that whole time, their food may be stored in their cheek! Once they know no one is watching, they will bury it in a real cache.