



GRAY SQUIRREL

Kingdom: Animalia **Phylum:** Chordata **Class:** Mammalia **Order:** Rodentia **Family:** Sciuridae
Sciurus carolinensis

Description: This agile, alert animal is a common sight in both rural and urban areas.

Length: 9-12 inches with a 7-10 inch tail

Weight: 12-28 oz.

Habitat: Prefers woodlands

Distribution: Native to North America but introduced to Great Britain, Ireland and South Africa.

Diet: Tree seeds

Life Span: 3-4 years

Status: Stable

Special Characteristics:

- The long, muscular hind legs and the short front legs help the Gray Squirrel leap.
- The hind feet are double jointed to help him scramble up and down the trees.
- The front feet have 4 slender toes with sharp claws used for gripping the trees.
- The back feet have 5 toes.
- The bushy tail helps the Gray Squirrel keep its balance in the trees.
- They do not hibernate
- A Gray Squirrel will build several nests in tree branches or hollow trees and use them all.
- They can leap over 20 feet.
- The front teeth continue to grow throughout the squirrel's life.
- They bury extra food just below the soil's surface where it can be easily located.
- Communication is by calls, body language and scent. The position of the tail indicated mood.
- Urine and glandular secretions identify individuals.

Reproduction:

- Sexual maturity at 11 months
- Gestation 44 days.
- Average litter size is 3
- Females have 2 litters per year.
- Babies are fed every 2-4 hours
- Weaned at 10 weeks

