

LaRC Species Highlight: Eastern Gray Squirrel

COMMON NAME: Eastern Gray Squirrel

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Sciurus carolinensis*

TYPE: Rodent

DIET: Nuts, seeds, buds, and flowers of trees

LENGTH: 9.1 – 12 inches

WEIGHT: 0.88 – 1.3 lbs



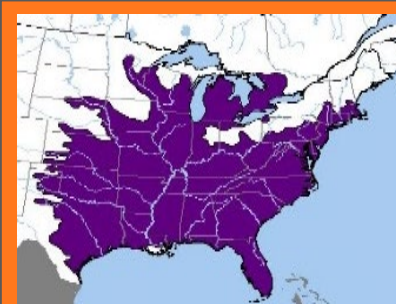
FUN FACTS

Appearance and Attributes

- ✓ Its coat is gray on top and white underneath in the winter and a tannish color in the summer.
- ✓ It has a bushy tail bordered with white hairs.
- ✓ Like other rodents, their front teeth never stop growing.
- ✓ Their round fore prints are one inch long, while their triangular hind prints are 2.25 inches long.

Life History and Diet

- ✓ Squirrels carry their food and bury it in several locations to prepare for winter. Some nuts and acorns that are buried are not recovered and sprout into new trees.
- ✓ They have an excellent sense of smell, which help them locate the food they buried away. They can smell a buried nut under a foot of snow!
- ✓ In the wild, their lifespan is about 12 years.



● Distribution

Map of habitat range in North America.



Female Eastern Gray Squirrels may start having babies as young as five and a half months old.

When they feel threatened, they run away in a zigzag pattern, a useful strategy to escape hawks and other predators.



Eastern Gray Squirrels are alert, inquisitive rodents, and very fast when moving and jumping amongst treetops. They are most active in the daytime, particularly at dawn and during the afternoon. They can also swim well for short distances.

If any wildlife is hurt or in distress at LaRC, please call the LaRC Environmental Office (Ade Remington) at 757-864-8332. In emergencies, call 911 (center phone) or 864-2222 (cell phone).

SPECIES STATUS:

Least Concern

environmental.larc.nasa.gov