



# SQUIRRELS

## TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-SQUIRREL CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the squirrel will lose its natural fear of humans and become aggressive.
- **Do not attempt to pet squirrels.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Squirrel bites can cause injury and carry disease.
- **Do not move "abandoned" baby squirrels.** If you find a fallen squirrel nest on the ground, the best action is to leave the nest at the base of the closest tree. The mother will search for the nest nearby.
- **Keep them out of the bird feeder.** Place the feeder at least 10 feet in any direction from where a squirrel can jump to the feeder.
- **Seal potential denning locations within your home.** Placing caps on chimneys and blocking outside entryways to crawlspaces, attics, and under porches will deter squirrels.

## BENEFITS OF SQUIRRELS

Squirrels play an important ecological role as seed and spore dispersers. Squirrels catch, or store, seeds and nuts in the soil and trees. When forgotten, these seeds and nuts sprout into new plants and trees.

Squirrels also spread mushrooms through their scat. After eating a mushroom, the spores travel through their guts unchanged, and are then dispersed throughout the forest.

## NATURAL HISTORY

- Squirrels are members of the Sciuridae family, consisting of small and medium-sized rodents. Tree squirrels are commonly seen everywhere from woodlands to city parks.
- Tree squirrels are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. Though they are excellent climbers and spend a lot of time in trees, squirrels come to the ground in search of food such as nuts, acorns, berries, and flowers. They also eat bark, eggs, and baby birds.
- Tree squirrels live in family groups. Family groups are territorial, and areas are primarily defended by the male who holds the highest rank in the group hierarchy.
- Tree squirrels are primarily diurnal (active during the day) and crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk).