

FOX SQUIRREL INFORMATION

Class	Mammalia
Order	Rodentia
Family	Sciuridae
Species	<i>Sciurus niger</i>
Description	The largest tree squirrel with a typical coat of reddish brown variations existing from blond to black. Bottoms of the feet are black and bones are pink. Toenails are black.
Range	Home range is eastern Rocky Mountains to East Coast, not present in New England. Introduced into California. The Delmarva Peninsula Fox Squirrel is endangered in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.
Habitat	Natural habitat is deciduous and coniferous forests, but in the Ventura and Los Angeles County areas they inhabit suburban gardens and urban parks. They nest in trees with summer and winter dreys, will den in attics and decks; in cold climates will den in ground.
Niche	Arboreal/diurnal
Diet	Acorns, buds, fruit, seeds, berries, carrion, bones, eggs, fungi, bark, bird seed
Weight	Adults are 504-1062 grams
Body Length	454-698 mm
Tail Length	200-300 mm
# Teeth	20
Habits	Acute hearing and sense of smell; scatter hoards food, aggressively defends territory but not stash, two molts annually
Adaptations	Readily adapted to suburban gardens and parks, notorious bird feeder visitors
Social Behavior	Generally solitary but will den together for warmth
Reproduction	Mates in winter and spring with litter born Jan/Feb and July/Aug, dominant male guards female who is receptive one day only, gestation is 45 days. 1-5 young with average birthweight of 16 gm. Eyes open at 28 days, sexually mature at one year.
Life Span	In the wild-5 years and in captivity 8-10 years but known as long as 17 years
Enemies	Raptors, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, bobcats but humans take the largest toll with automobiles, dogs, cats and hunting
Defenses	Remain motionless to avoid raptor detection and warning call with tail flagging when danger is sensed

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