

Squirrels



Squirrels are generalist species found throughout Wisconsin. Gray (right) and fox (left) squirrels are generally 1-2 feet long, including their tail, and are commonly seen in hardwood forests. Red squirrels (pictured below right) are much smaller, with a deeper red coat, and are generally found in pine forests. Flying squirrels (below left) are a protected species. They are nocturnal and rarely seen, and are sleek with an olive-brown coat. While squirrels can be entertaining to watch and enjoy, they also can be a nuisance, destroying gardens and lawns, and getting into buildings to eat stored seeds or gnaw on wiring. There are a variety of strategies that can be used to manage nuisance squirrels.

Don't Feed Wildlife

- Clean up fallen bird seed and put barriers around the feeders squirrels can't get past. There are a variety of commercial products such as squirrel-proof feeders and baffle devices. These products can also be inexpensively replicated at home.

Protect Your Pet

- Squirrels can carry diseases that may be transmitted to your pets. Keep cats indoors and monitor pets when outdoors.

Discourage Squirrels

- Exclude squirrels from climbing structures. Encircle poles with a 2 ft. wide metal loop of smooth metal 6 ft. above ground; attach loop with springs if around a tree to allow the tree to grow without being encumbered.
- Cover small openings in buildings with ½-inch wire mesh. Be sure all squirrels are out of the building before placing mesh; more damage can result from a squirrel gnawing his way out.
- Trim trees adjacent to buildings so squirrels can't jump onto roofs or eaves.
- Chemical repellents can be used to protect from squirrel damage. Repellents with capsaicin or naphthalene can be bought at farm and garden stores, and some repellent can be made at home.
- Scare tactics such as motion-detector sprinklers can keep squirrels away from an area.
- Playing a radio continuously in your attic may encourage squirrels who have taken up residence to move on.



Quick Facts

- Wisconsin boasts several species of squirrel, including 2 species of flying squirrels, 3 tree squirrels, chipmunks, and 2 species of ground squirrels.
- Squirrels are rodents like mice, beaver, and groundhogs. While they mostly eat fruits, seeds, and nuts, they will occasionally eat meat and insects.
- Squirrel hunting and trapping is legal year-round without a DNR license on your own property, although you need landowner permission to release trapped squirrels. Many municipalities in Wisconsin have specific regulations regarding the discharge of firearms, so check with your local government to ensure adherence to local ordinances.
- It is not legal to hunt or trap flying squirrels and as a protected mammal a permit must be obtained from the local DNR biologist for removal efforts.

For more information, visit our webpage:

dnr.wi.gov

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