

ALIEN SPECIES ALERT!

Have you seen this squirrel in your area?



THE INTRODUCED EASTERN
GREY SQUIRREL CAN BE GREY
OR BLACK



Eastern Grey Squirrels were introduced to Vancouver Island in 1966 from eastern North America. They are quickly spreading up the island from their point of introduction in Metchosin.

They cause damage to homes, gardens and farms by:

- Digging up lawns and eating garden bulbs
- Chewing on wire, removing shingles and shakes, and chewing through eaves to nest in attics, roofs and chimneys
- Damaging nut trees and depleting nut production (hazelnuts and walnuts)
- Removing bark from trees



Grey squirrels are a threat to our native species because they can:

- Damage Garry Oak trees by stripping bark and eating acorns
- Eat the bulbs of Camas flowers
- Compete with and displace native red squirrels
- Transfer diseases to red squirrels
- Compete with native birds for tree cavities and bird feeders
- Eat bird eggs and nestlings



Protect our native Vancouver Island species by:

- Not relocating grey squirrels
- Not feeding grey squirrels
- Controlling access to garbage, compost and bird feeders

Tips for squirrel-proofing your home and property are available on the internet

The Ministry of Environment would like your assistance in determining the northern extent and range of the Eastern Grey Squirrel on Vancouver Island.

If you have seen an Eastern Grey Squirrel north of Duncan, west of Sooke, in the Lake Cowichan or Cobble Hill area, or on the Gulf Islands, please report your sighting online at:

<http://web.viu.ca/eagillis/squirrels.htm>

Or call 1-250-751-3100

Know the differences between the Eastern Grey Squirrel and our native Red Squirrel!

INTRODUCED GREY SQUIRREL



Physical differences:

- Body larger and chunkier, usually grey with brown tinges or black
- Large, fat, bushy tail that folds over the head in rest position
- Long, slightly hairy ears
- Twice as big as the native red squirrel: 17-20" or 40-50 cm long

Vocalization: simple, deep *qua-qua-qua-qua*

Breeding: may have 2 litters

Habitat: Deciduous or mixed forests

Behaviour: stores food away from nest, therefore more active in winter.

Our native Red Squirrel is being displaced by the introduced Grey Squirrel

NATIVE RED SQUIRREL



Physical differences:

- Body, head and tail are olive brown or rusty red
- Less bushy tail, sometimes tipped with black
- Black flank stripe
- White eye-ring
- About half the size of the grey squirrel: 11-13" or 28-32 cm

Vocalization: variable-pitch chatter *tsik, tsik, tsik, chrrrr-siew, siew siew*

Breeding: 1 litter in spring

Habitat: Coniferous forests

Behaviour: stores food in nest, less active in winter.

For further information please visit the ministry website:

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/wildweb/generalinfo.htm>

