

into new habitat will inevitably have to fight with squirrels that are already established in that location. It is far better to look for local solutions when conflicts between humans and squirrels arise.

Injured Squirrels: Injured squirrels may be brought to the Wildlife Care Center from 9 am until 5 pm, seven days a week. When capturing and transporting injured squirrels it is important to remember that squirrels can bite, scratch, and transmit disease to humans. Care should be taken to avoid direct contact with the animal. Place the squirrel in a well-ventilated box and provide the animal with water but no food. To reduce stress on the animal, house it in a warm, quiet location and transport it for treatment as soon as possible. The Wildlife Care Center does not provide treatment for non-native squirrel species. If you believe that you have found a non-native species, you may bring it to the Care Center for euthanasia or you can attempt to find a veterinarian to provide treatment.

Baby Squirrels: Squirrels frequently move their young around and sometimes drop them when spooked. In addition, adolescent squirrels are prone to wandering away from their nests for increasingly long periods as they develop. Unless the young are clearly injured, it is best not to interfere. The mother is usually nearby and will retrieve the young after humans leave the vicinity. While this may seem harsh, it is important to remember that many squirrels thrive in even the most urban of environments. They have a far greater chance of survival being raised by their mother than they do in captivity. Leave the young out and avoid the immediate area for at least 4-6 hours. If you are concerned about predators, place the animal in an open box suspended from a nearby branch or other high area. Often the mother will approach and leave several times before retrieving the young. If the youngster has not been retrieved after 4-6 uninterrupted hours, it can be brought to the Wildlife Care Center for treatment. The Care Center does not raise non-native squirrels. Non-native squirrels will be provided with humane euthanasia.



Audubon Society of Portland Wildlife Care Center

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9 am-5 pm - 7 days a week 365 days a year



Administration Offices

Phone: 503-292-6855

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Hours: 9 am to 5 pm, Mon-Fri

Nature Store

Phone: 503-292-9493

Hours: 10 am to 6 pm, Mon-Sat

10 am to 5 pm, Sun

Sanctuaries

Every day, dawn to dusk

Rare Bird Alert

Phone: 503-292-6855

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Living with Urban Wildlife



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Urban Squirrels



Living with Urban Squirrels

Squirrels of the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region. In the Portland-Vancouver Metro area there are five species of native squirrel: the western gray squirrel, Douglas squirrel, California ground squirrel, Townsend's chipmunk, and the northern flying squirrel. Western gray squirrels were once the most common squirrel species in the Portland area but have now almost completely disappeared due to development and competition from non-native species. Today our two most common urban squirrels, the fox and eastern gray, are non-native, invasive species from the East Coast.

Non-native Squirrels: Fox squirrels were brought to Oregon from the eastern United States and have established themselves in urban and suburban habitat throughout the state. They are the most common tree squirrels found in Portland and have contributed to the decline of native squirrel species. Fox squirrels are reddish brown in color with large bushy tails and tan undersides. Oregon's fox squirrels are notorious for breeding "out of season", and infant and very young squirrels found later than October 1st and earlier than April 1st are typically members of this species. Eastern gray squirrels are small gray squirrels with a white belly. They have been established in Vancouver for well over a decade but are just now becoming established in Portland. They are similar in color but significantly smaller than the native western gray squirrel.

Wildlife Care Center Non-Native Squirrel Policy: The Audubon Society of Portland Wildlife Care Center does not accept non-native animals for treatment. This includes fox and eastern gray squirrels. Introduced species compete with and reduce the numbers of native wildlife. Injured and orphaned non-native squirrels left at the Wildlife Care Center will be humanely euthanized.

Situations and Solutions

Squirrels in attics, chimneys, basements, and crawlspaces: Squirrels will take advantage of accessible attics, chimneys, basements, and crawlspaces both to raise young and escape the winter cold. Many problems can be avoided by sealing up entryways before squirrels take up residence. If a squirrel does take up residence in your home, it is important to determine whether she is raising young before attempting removal. Please remember that squirrel breeding season in Portland can begin as early as February and extend all the way to November. If you determine that the squirrel is raising young, it is best to wait until the young are able to fend for themselves before attempting removal. Most squirrels are able to survive on their own at 10-12 weeks of age. If you must remove squirrels sooner, use one of the repellent methods listed below that will allow squirrels the opportunity to leave on their own and take their young with them.

There are several methods to remove squirrels from your home. Non-lethal repellents can be bought at local feed and home and garden stores. Placing a radio set to a talk station in close proximity to the denning area is also an effective method for causing a squirrel to leave. Live traps can be used, but only in cases where the squirrel has been determined not to have young. Trapped squirrels should be released back into



© Victoria Crowe
Townsend's Chipmunk

the same neighborhood after entry holes into your home have been sealed up. A one-way door can be made very simply or purchased commercially and allows the squirrels to exit the attic but not get back in. This lets you make sure all squirrels have left the interior and then permanently block the entrance. One-



© Victoria Crowe
Northern Flying Squirrel

way doors can be built cheaply with items at your local hardware store. Fasten a double layer of hardware cloth or wire mesh to the top of the entrance. Allow the cloth to drop shut flush. No method will ultimately be successful unless

you determine how squirrels are accessing your home. Once squirrels have been removed, all access points must be covered with hardware cloth or squirrels will quickly regain entrance.

Squirrels losing their fur: Hair loss in squirrels is generally a sign of mange, a naturally occurring, microscopic mite that causes hair loss and scabbed skin. Mange is oftentimes a secondary problem that afflicts squirrels that are already debilitated or in poor health. If you see a squirrel with possible mange, it is best to leave the squirrel alone and allow nature to take its course. Some squirrels will recover on their own while others will eventually succumb. In order to reduce transmission between squirrels, it is also helpful to remove feeders where squirrels congregate. We recommend that feeders be taken down for a period of at least two weeks. Free-roaming squirrels with mange do not pose a risk to either humans or domestic pets.

Relocation of Squirrels: The Audubon Society of Portland generally opposes the relocation of wildlife as a solution to human-wildlife conflict situations. In the case of squirrels, relocation is usually only a temporary solution as the relocated animal will quickly be replaced by another of the same species. Relocation of squirrels has contributed to the proliferation of non-native species into new habitat. It is also important to note that different squirrel species have very different habitat needs. For example, the fox and eastern gray squirrels that do very well in our urban and suburban neighborhoods cannot survive in the dense forest of Forest Park. Finally, squirrels are territorial. Squirrels relocated