



Squirrels are usually classified as a pest species due to their habits of living in houses. The most common complaints include the following:

- Squirrels living in the attic
- Squirrels living in the chimney
- Squirrels chewing on woodwork
- Squirrels stealing bird seed
- Loose squirrel stuck inside home

For these reasons, many people wish to have this nuisance animal trapped and removed.

SQUIRREL BIOLOGY: (*Sciurus carolinensis*) Squirrels are usually gray, sometimes red, brown, or black. Adults average about one pound in weight. They can supposedly live for up to ten years, but life expectancy in the wild probably isn't more than 3-4 years. Squirrels give birth to two litters per year - one in late summer, and one in winter. The female gives birth to 3-4 young after a 44 day gestation, and the young grow quickly, and are weaned in about ten weeks.

SQUIRREL BEHAVIOR: Squirrels are most active in morning and evening. Squirrels eat mostly nuts and seeds. They live in a variety of habitats, both forest and suburban or city areas. They establish home territories, and often communicate via scent, chattering, and flickering of the fluffy tail.

NUISANCE CONCERNS: Squirrels love to live in attics. They also love to chew, and will chew on houses

or wires, ducts, pipes once inside an attic. People don't like the noises of squirrels running about above the ceiling or in the eaves, but it's really the chewing that's a problem. If squirrels chew on electrical wires in an attic, it can create a real potential fire hazard. Squirrels also bring in nesting material and leave urine and feces in an attic. They also commonly nest in a chimney where they can sometimes get stuck and frantically scratch, or sometimes even get into the fireplace and inside the house.

SQUIRREL DISEASES: No real important diseases, though they do carry parasites, and thus are vectors for the diseases that fleas, ticks, etc. can transmit. They also leave a lot of droppings, which pose the usual excrement health risks, such as leptospirosis or Salmonella.

HOW DO I GET RID OF SQUIRRELS? If it's just squirrels on the property, the best bet is trapping and removal. If its squirrels in the attic, then all of the open holes and vulnerable areas through which they can enter should be sealed shut with a material that squirrels can't chew through, such as steel. The squirrels can then be trapped and removed, or excluded through the use of one-way exclusion doors and tunnels.

ARE THERE EFFECTIVE SQUIRREL PREVENTION METHODS? Yes. You can keep squirrels away, and out of your house, with a variety of techniques. For property matters, don't leave out things that attract them, such as easily accessible bird feeders, fruit trees, etc. If you really want to take it far, cut down all your trees! But more importantly, to keep them away from your house, you must find and seal all open holes that lead inside, to the attic.