

Grey Squirrels



- The **Eastern grey squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is the most common squirrel in urban areas in southern BC and southern Vancouver Island
- **BC grey squirrels are not known to carry rabies or parapox virus**
- As Schedule C animals under the *BC Wildlife Act*, grey squirrels can only be trapped using devices listed in the BC Hunting & Trapping Regulations

Understanding Squirrels

Other squirrel species in BC include: Douglas squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*), Northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), and red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*). These are protected furbearers and generally do not come into conflict with people. Furbearing squirrels can only be trapped between November 1 and March 15 in most regions of BC. Grey squirrels are distinguishable by their grey or black colour, larger size, wide fluffy tails, and high visibility in urban areas.

Grey squirrels...

- can have up to two litters of 2-6 babies a year, in early spring and early summer
- babies leave the den at approx. 8 weeks old, and independent by 12 weeks old



Did you know?

Grey squirrels' gathering and planting of acorns helps trees grow. They eat nuts and seeds, but also plants like berries and garden bulbs.

Common Conflicts

Grey squirrels are often blamed when other resident squirrels leave an area, however given that grey squirrels have different food

and shelter preferences, urban development and loss of coniferous forests should first be acknowledged. They may come into conflict by denning in structures like chimneys, attics, or walls, and chewing wires and tree bark.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support killing squirrels for nuisance reasons.

Relocation of adult squirrels should only be done outside the breeding season within animal's home range, and as per the *BC Wildlife Act* (within 1km on Vancouver & Gulf Islands, 10km in rest of province). Killing is rarely necessary and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young. If attractants have not been removed, more squirrels may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

Conflict Resolution

If animal is at risk, cage traps may be used for relocation within home range. Squirrels may be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment if needed. If in critical distress, a veterinarian or rehabilitator may euthanize.



Recommended Actions & Methods

<p>Prevention & Exclusion Before any conflict, and to prevent future issues</p>	<p>Remove potential food sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secure garbage bins and composts ✓ Bird feeders not overflowing <p>Maintain residential structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Block access to vents and other entry points ✓ Use secure chimney caps ✓ Remove roof access (e.g. trimming back branches) ✓ To confirm den use – loosely cover hole with leaves, newspaper or straw; if present, squirrel can push it away and re-open
<p>Deterrence If babies are mobile (8-12 weeks old) or there are no babies</p>	<p>Use mild humane harassment techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place apple cider vinegar-soaked rags in plastic container with holes in lid, place containers in den or entry points ✓ Close entry when squirrel (and family) move out
<p>Eviction</p>	<p>Evict the animal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a one-way door so squirrel can leave, but not re-enter ✓ Do not install when there may be dependent young in den, or if necessary, be sure to use reunion techniques ✓ Leave door in place for 2-3 nights ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide - using pure gas cylinder into sealed chamber with regulator
- Shot to brain of trapped or free-ranging animal (includes gun, air rifle, pellet)
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Cervical dislocation
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- Spring trap (e.g. Kania or Conibear-style)
- Killing neck snare
- Crossbow

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Drowning or suffocation
- Glue traps
- Rodenticides, bait poisons or chloroform
- Fumigant poisons
- Leghold or foot snare
- Carbon monoxide by vehicle exhaust
- Electrocution of conscious animal
- Freezing (including dry ice)

