

## Squirrels

You often see them perched on park benches, scampering up trees, or dashing across telephone wires. They are small, furry rodents known as squirrels.

Squirrels often have large eyes and long, bushy tails. They live in almost every part of the world. There are more than 270 species (kinds) of squirrels. They range in size from the pygmy squirrels of Africa, which are about 5 inches (13 centimeters) long, to the giant squirrels of Asia, which are about 36 inches (90 centimeters) long.

There are three main types of squirrels: tree squirrels, ground squirrels, and flying squirrels. Tree squirrels include the red squirrel, the eastern fox squirrel, and the gray squirrel. The gray squirrel is often seen in yards and city parks. Chipmunks and woodchucks are common ground squirrels. The flying squirrel has a flap of skin on each side of its body that stretches from its front leg to its back leg. When outstretched, this flap of skin helps the squirrel glide from branch to branch or tree to tree.

Squirrels mainly eat nuts, seeds, and buds, though they sometimes feed on insects. In colder climates, ground squirrels hibernate in winter.

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