



DO YOU KNOW..... ABOUT SQUIRRELS

To some, squirrels are a pox on the face of the Earth; destroying bird feeders, digging up flower bulbs and planting oak trees in unwanted places. To others, squirrels are free entertainment; their acrobatics and amusing antics a pleasure to watch. However you view them, squirrels are abundant and live everywhere.

In this area, the Eastern Grey Squirrel is very common. Small pockets of Pine (Red) Squirrels, Fox Squirrels and Northern Flying Squirrels also exist in isolated areas.



The Grey Squirrel actually comes in a range of colors from pure black to pure white. They build nests, called dreys, high in treetops or take advantage of a hollow limb or trunk. Grey Squirrels do not store their food in one place, as do Pine Squirrels; instead they "scatter horde" burying nuts all over the place. Studies do suggest that squirrels have at least some memory of where they hide their food. Because of this food storage technique, grey squirrels cannot guard all their food from other animals and losses do occur. On the other hand, grey squirrels do not expend much energy defending their food cache and need not worry about losing their entire winter supply as do pine squirrels.



Breeding occurs in late winter and late summer and the babies are born about 45 days later. Average litter size is three to four and the babies are naked, blind and deaf at birth, totally dependent on their mother. Dad plays no part in raising the babies and, in fact, is driven away by mom due to his

tendency to kill his offspring. It takes mom about 12 to 14 weeks to rear her youngsters and send them on their way. Many babies are brought to Second Chance because something has happened to mom. Even a fully weaned squirrel will have a tough time managing to find food without mom helping to defend the meal from other adult squirrels. Weaned orphans often show up at our Center because they



have been following people or trying to get inside buildings. People are often concerned that this unusually friendly behavior means the squirrel has rabies. Actually, the behavior simply means the youngster is very hungry and has somehow decided that people will provide food. Perhaps someone in the neighborhood fed the area squirrels and the youngster has learned to associate people with food. Normally, once the squirrel is safe and well-fed at Second Chance, the friendliness disappears!



Grey squirrels have a potential life span of 20 years; however, only 15 to 20 percent manage to reach the age of two. After that age, their chance of surviving increases to between 50 and 70 percent depending on the abundance of food from year to year.

People often ask if squirrels make good



pets. The answer is an emphatic NO! Not only is it illegal to own wildlife, but squirrels become "squirrel-y" as they mature. A young squirrel raised by itself will become human bonded but



that does not mean it is tame; it means simply that it is not afraid of people. These animals become unreliable often biting the hand that feeds them (not to mention friends, neighbors and relatives of the "owner"). It is at this time that Second Chance is contacted. Sadly, we are not able to accept human bonded adult squirrels, we do not have



the space to keep a squirrel permanently. Releasing the animal is a death sentence; they do not relate to other squirrels and are so used to people that they are unable to take care of themselves. They often approach people for food and may bite or scratch, especially if the person attempts to hold them. The next step is to trap the animal, euthanize it and test it for rabies because of its unusually friendly behavior.

If you find a baby squirrel, please transfer it to a licensed rehabilitator as quickly as possible. During baby squirrel season, Second Chance has all ages of babies and can easily find same age brothers and sisters for a new orphan to grow up with. We are proud to say we raise the meanest squirrels in Montgomery County; by the time they are released, they want nothing to do with humans. Our squirrels know they are squirrels and have no problem adjusting to life in the wild.

NOW YOU KNOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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