

# PAWS & CLAWS

## Living with Wildlife – Eastern Grey Squirrel

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[www.wildlifeinfo.ca](http://www.wildlifeinfo.ca)

Squirrels, those amazing acrobats that leap from branch to branch with such ease, come in several different species in this region.

The most frequently seen is the Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). The name sometimes causes confusion as there can be different colour variations, including grey, black or dark brown with golden highlights, even in the same litter.

The black phase is often the dominant colour here while further south you see more greys. It is speculated the gene responsible for the black colouration has some cold-weather adaptation associated with it. We too observed that black juveniles being cared for at the Centre were more 'highly-wired', displaying perhaps the extra energy needed for a winter climate.

The large bushy tail serves many purposes – as a weather protector during winter, as a rudder when leaping from high places and, observing the intensive tail twitching, as a signal to other squirrels. The tail is also used to distract a pursuing predator as the fine tail bones break off easily, allowing it to escape and explaining why



we sometimes see squirrels with partial tails.

They are arboreal or live in trees and build large leaf nests known as dreys. They are diurnal or active during the day. In spring, they feed on the buds of trees and fresh leaves. During the summer, the diet consists of winged seeds of maple and elm seeds along with a wide variety of berries and other wild fruits. In autumn, they bury hundreds of hard nuts such as acorns, hickory nuts, walnuts, beechnuts and pine seeds for winter.

Contrary to popular myth, squirrels do not find buried nuts by memory but by their highly developed sense of smell. It is speculated that they find 80% of the nuts they bury. The remaining nuts often germinate to grow into new trees. In this way, they

contribute substantially to reforestation.

The eastern grey squirrel has two breeding seasons each year with the first litter born between March and May and the second between July and August. The newborn are naked and blind and weigh as little as 15 grams, explaining why the female often seeks temporary shelter in soffits and attics to protect her young from predators.

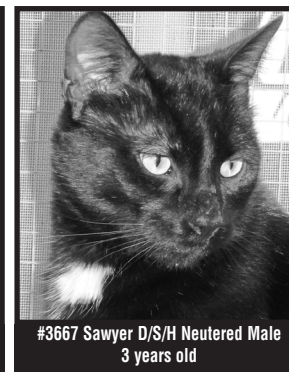
It is thus very important to be patient with wildlife that may have taken up residence on your property. Check [www.wildlifeinfo.ca](http://www.wildlifeinfo.ca) for more information.

Next week we will tell you more about the other two species of squirrels, the American Red Squirrel and the Flying Squirrel, that live in this area.

## Pet Adoptions



#3242 Autumn D/S/H Spayed Female  
3 years



#3667 Sawyer D/S/H Neutered Male  
3 years old



#3453 Toby D/M/H Neutered male  
5 years old



### PET OF THE WEEK

#3675 JASPER

Jasper was brought to the shelter in March, he had been a stray for several months. He was in terrible condition when he was first brought in, his fur was badly matted and full of burrs requiring a few patches of hair to be shaved. Jasper is now healthy, and ready to find a good home. He is a 4 year old, D/M/H neutered male. Jasper is a friendly cat, he likes attention and can be quite affectionate. Jasper is tolerant of most cats, but gets along best with females. He is very outgoing and curious, he likes to explore. Jasper can play rough and would be best suited in an adult home.

### Arnprior Humane Society

Please note: Arnprior Humane Society has many other companion animals available for adoption. Featured animals are adopted quickly!  
To learn more about adopting an animal from the Arnprior Humane Society  
Website: [www.arnpriorhumanesociety.ca](http://www.arnpriorhumanesociety.ca)  
Email: [district.spca@bellnet.ca](mailto:district.spca@bellnet.ca) • Telephone: 613-623-0916