
School Pest Solutions



Squirrels

Tree squirrels are occasional pests in urban areas including school buildings. In Maine, there are two species of concern.

Gray squirrels are gray on the top with a white underside. They measure 16 to 20 inches long; nearly half this length is the tail.

Red squirrels are smaller but more agile, alert, and noisier than the grays. They are rusty-brown on top, turning grayer during winter, and off white below. Red squirrels measure about 12 inches from nose to tail. They are strongly territorial and defend their food sources and den trees against intruders.



Tree squirrels feed on a variety of material including nuts, fruit, seeds, berries, insects, and bark. They nest in tree cavities, old woodpecker holes, attics, etc. If these sites are unavailable they may construct leafy nests in the branches of trees.

Damage

Squirrels typically gain entrance to attics and other structures from the roof, usually where tree limbs overhang the roofline. They may enter through damaged or unscreened vents although they sometimes gnaw their way into an attic. The sound of running or gnawing in walls or the ceiling during the day often indicates the presence of squirrels. Similar sounds at night usually indicate the presence of rats or mice. Squirrels can cause extensive damage to the insulation in the attic or walls, and may gnaw and damage wiring creating the risk of electrical fires. During winter, tree squirrels may damage trees and other ornamental plants by eating the bark off the limbs.

Management Methods

- Trim all tree limbs back at least 8-10 feet from roofs. If this is not possible, discourage climbing by fastening a 2-foot band of sheet metal around the trunk 6-8 feet above ground.
- All openings attics, vents, overhanging eaves, and siding must be sealed to exclude squirrels. Sheet metal, hardware cloth, and steel wool are effective materials for sealing the openings.
- Openings should not be repaired until the squirrels are out of the building. Usually a one-way door is used to allow squirrels to leave the building and not re-enter.
- Seal openings where utility cables or pipes enter buildings.
- Install chimney caps on all chimneys and check for gaps in the flashing at the chimney base.
- Live traps can be used to reduce local squirrel populations or to remove individual squirrels from a building interior. Effective baits include fruit, peanut butter, nuts, seeds and vanilla extract.

For more information, contact your local Animal Damage Control Office or one of the following Regional Warden Service Offices:

Ashland: 800-624-2512 or 207-435-3231
Greenville: 800-624-2538 or 207-695-3756
Bangor: 800-624-2498 or 207-941-4440
Sidney: 800-292-7436 or 207-547-4145
Gray: 800-295-2435 or 207-657-2345

For More Information

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