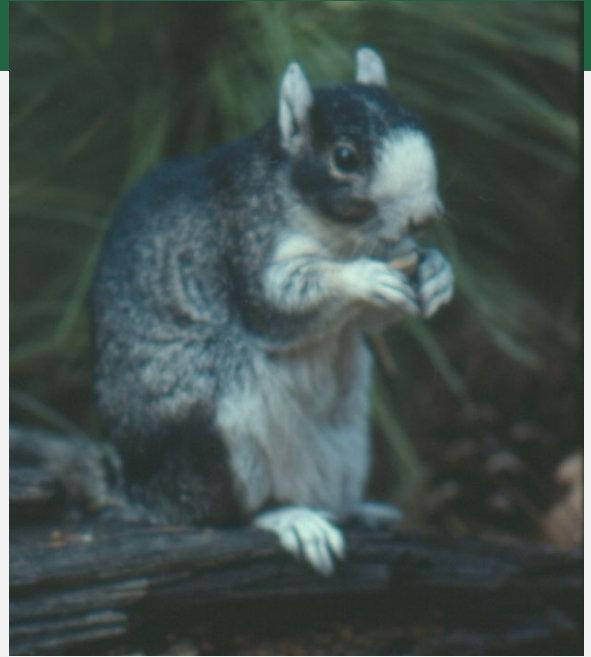


EASTERN FOX SQUIRREL

Sciurus niger



ID TIPS Largest tree squirrel in NC, twice the size of the common gray squirrel. Occur in a variety of color phases, including black, gray, brown, and reddish; often have white patches.

HABITAT Mostly open, mature pine-oak forests in North Carolina.

BREEDING After mating in midwinter, litters (usually of 2-4 young) are born in February or March. Fox squirrels are blind and hairless at birth, opening their eyes in 4-5 weeks, and begin weaning at 8-9 weeks of age.

NEST Tree cavity dens, used for rearing young and protection from winter weather, are found in large old hardwood trees, mature longleaf pines, or dead standing trees, usually near wetland edges.

Leaf nests are often constructed during warmer months in the limbs of oak or pine trees.

FOOD Pine seeds, acorns, hickory nuts, flowers and buds, fruits, fungi, insects, and occasionally bird eggs

ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

Improve habitat for fox squirrels by managing property for a mixture of mature hardwoods and longleaf pines.

Stream buffers can provide both habitat and travel corridors for fox squirrels, which improve access to preferred habitats.

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

Use frequent prescribed fire to maintain pine savannas, but aim for a heterogenous burn to retain pockets of mast-producing trees like oaks and hickories for both food and nest sites.

CONSERVATION STATUS

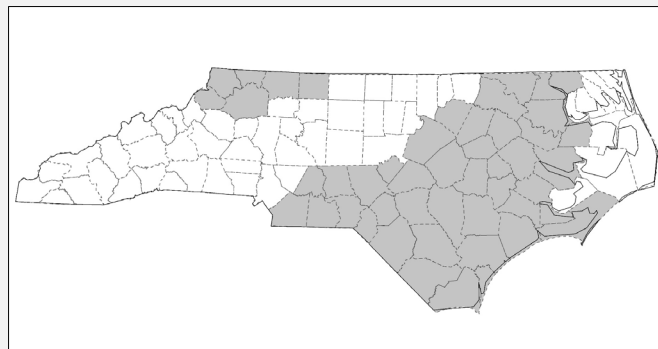
Locally Common

FOREST USE AT A GLANCE

Mature longleaf pine and open oak/pine forests

NORTH CAROLINA RANGE

Most common in the Sandhills and SE Coastal Plain.



DID YOU KNOW? Fox squirrels are diurnal and are generally active for 8 to 14 hours a day. They are solitary except when breeding or rearing young.