

The grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Information about Squirrels

The grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is an introduced species which is now common throughout most of England. Squirrels are often viewed as an attractive addition to our wildlife and they regularly frequent gardens. However, they may become a nuisance and, where they gain access to buildings, the chewing of materials, including electrical wiring, can cause damage and pose a fire hazard. They also strip bark from trees, which causes serious economic damage in woodlands. Competition for food and habitats with the native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has contributed to the decline of the red squirrel.



Biology

Grey squirrels usually have their young either in dreys (nests made of twigs and leaves) or in holes in trees. They will also breed in roof spaces where they may build their nests from loft insulation or other available materials. Grey squirrels do not hibernate but are less active during periods of cold weather. They normally have two litters each year; the first in February to March and a second in June to July. The litter size averages three to four, and the young are independent at about three months of age.

Control

Typical methods of trapping include Cage Trapping and using spring traps. In some cases poisons can be used. Details of the controls we can offer and our terms and conditions are on the next page. We will only assist where squirrels are getting into buildings, we can not help with squirrels in gardens.

The law requires that whatever control method is chosen it is fatal. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is illegal to release grey squirrels or to allow them to escape into the wild, and those releasing captured squirrels risk prosecution.

Proofing Buildings

Once control measures have been successful it is essential that building works are undertaken to repair damage, and block holes to prevent other squirrels getting back into buildings.

Crushed wire netting, metal sheeting or other suitable materials can be used to block any entry points. It is important that all access routes are identified but no action taken until it can be confirmed that no squirrels remain within the site to be protected. Baffles attached to rainwater down pipes or cables and wires may assist in reducing access to roof spaces. However, the climbing abilities and ingenuity of squirrels should not be underestimated.

The removal of tree branches, which are in close proximity to walls and roofs, will eliminate potential access routes.

Avoiding the spillage and availability of bird or pet foods will assist in reducing attraction to squirrels. The use of squirrel-proof bird feeders may help in this respect.

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Services from us

What will Officers do ?

- Officers will use either a **cage trap** or a **spring trap** to catch grey squirrels
- We will ensure that the correct trap is chosen for your circumstances
- We will place the trap in the most appropriate, safe location where we believe it will be effective. **We can not guarantee that we will successfully catch the problem squirrel(s)**

Cage Trap	Spring Trap
	
<p>The law requires that this type of trap is checked daily.</p> <p>We may ask for your help to check if a squirrel has gone into the trap.</p> <p>We will deactivate the trap at weekends or when we know we are unable to visit.</p> <p>An officer will show you how you can safely close the trap by pressing down on the trap treadle</p>	<p>We need to check the trap regularly.</p> <p> This trap has a very strong spring which can amputate limbs.</p> <p>Under no circumstances should you touch the trap once it has been set.</p>

How much will it cost ?

- Our current charges are detailed on our website at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk , or available by calling our Customer Services Team on 01782 742590

How often will an Officer need to visit ?

- The number of visits we make depends upon the scale and complexity of the problem and the treatment method used.
- Squirrels are far from predictable and we can not be sure if the treatment will be effective immediately, or take some time. Typically we make 4-6 visits.

What will I need to do ?

- The officer will explain how you can assist – this depends on the type of trap we are using.

Cancelling a request / Terminating our Services

- You may terminate our services at any time, but will be required to return our property, and pay any charges incurred.

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