

# Cherokee Ethnobiology

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## GRAY SQUIRREL

### Cherokee Importance

Gray squirrels were an important food item for Cherokees in the past. One of the past favorites for many people in Northeast Oklahoma was to have squirrel brains with scrambled eggs. Hats or pouches could have also been made from tanning the squirrel hides. Gray squirrels are still sometimes hunted, though not as often in the past, with squirrel populations exploding in recent decades. Gray squirrels are not hunted as often as fox squirrels, as they are about half the size of a fox squirrel. One of the main uses for fox squirrel, other than eating was making bowstrings from its hide.

### Description

Gray squirrels have grayish white fur on their backs, legs and tails with white fur on their undersides. They resemble rats with furry tails. Gray squirrels can attain lengths of 1.5 feet, including the tail, and weights of 1 pound. Gray squirrels have many vocalizations which are used to communicate with each other, including danger. They will also perch on a limb and pop their tail when they have spotted danger. Gray squirrels prefer areas that have mast-producing trees, such as oak, hickory, pecan, walnut, and will even strip seeds from pine cones.

<b>Where found:</b>	Gray squirrels can be found in almost any habitat in Northeast Oklahoma where there are mast-producing trees such as oak, hickory, and walnut.
<b>Other Name:</b>	Tree Squirrel, Squirrel
<b>Taxonomy:</b>	Kingdom - Animalia Phylum - Chordata Class - Mammalia Order – Rodentia Family – Sciuridae Genus — <i>Sciurus</i> Species — <i>carolinensis</i>

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