



red squirrel

Tamiasciurus hudsonicus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Rodentia
Family: Sciuridae

Features

The adult red squirrel is a medium-sized squirrel with a tail that is much shorter than the combined length of its head and body. A mixture of cinnamon, brown, and black hairs cover most of the body and tail. A dark orange stripe down the middle of its back is noticeable during the summer. The belly is white or gray and the feet are gray.

Natural History

The red squirrel lives in dense pine forests or dense hardwood forests with a thick understory. It eats tree buds, leaves, flowers, fungi, acorns, bark, berries, hickory nuts, pine nuts, walnuts, insects, and the seeds of other trees. Tree cracks and crevices serve as storage space for extra food. It is most active in the early morning and late evening throughout the year. It is known to be a good swimmer. It makes several different calls with the scolding call the easiest to describe. The red squirrel builds a leaf nest or lives in a tree cavity. Mating occurs in late winter and summer. Litter size is about five. Young are helpless at birth and their

eyes open at about age four weeks. Adult size is attained in about three months.

Habitats

bottomland forests

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

northern third of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.