

Eastern Gray Squirrel Behaviors

Behaviors in **bold** are what will be recorded on the data sheet. Please note: Recovery behavior always begins with locating a nut in the ground and ends in recaching, eating, or unknown recovery behavior. All different types of interactions will be recorded as "Interaction".

Behavior	Subcategories	Description
Scatterhoarding	Caching ¹	locates a food item, puts in mouth, turns nut in mouth 1-2 times; carries nut in mouth to a spot where squirrel digs hole with forepaws with nose in dirt; arches body over hole, thrusts body to push nut into ground; covers nut with dirt and packs with light tapping of forepaws; must result in burial or hiding of a food item
	Recovery ¹	locates nut in ground using foraging behavior, pulls nut out of ground using mouth, may dig with forepaws to get nut out; tail held out straight or slightly arched
	Recache	squirrel moves to a new location and reburies/hide the food
	Eaten	may transport food to another location; must end by eating food
	Unknown	carries food out of sight, cannot determine if eaten or reburied
Foraging ¹		walking forward with nose to ground, moving head side to side; generally straight tail, may stop to sniff a particular spot on ground; eating food that was not dug up first; can also occur in tree
Resting		still but not tense/alert, sitting or laying down, usually in a drey (stick nest) or on a tree branch
Grooming		scratching body with hind or forefoot; using mouth to lick or bite at own body
Vocalizing ^{2,3}		incisor teeth rapidly chattering, may not be sound; accompanied by rapid tail jerking movements; repeated squeaking; gnawing like noises
Travel		movement on the ground or in the trees seemingly not related to interaction with another squirrel or foraging; head up, not in leaf litte
Alert ³		standing, attentive posture with both paws held against chest or vertical posture with one paw held against chest
Interaction	Nonaggressive interaction ³	within 5 m of another squirrel and not interacting aggressively
	Allogrooming ⁴	licking, mouthing, and grooming with forepaw of another squirrel's fur
	Greeting ⁴	oral-nasal contact between two squirrels
	Playing ⁴	amicable wresting and forelimb boxing between individuals
	Nest sharing ⁴	two or more animals simultaneously inhabiting a single nest
	Running a ^{2,3}	squirrel runs toward another squirrel; on ground
	Jumping-at ^{2,3}	first squirrel approaches and orients towards second squirrel, crouches and leaps towards second squirrel with one or both paws forward
	Chasing ^{2,3}	one squirrels runs after another on ground or in tree; can result in wrestling match
	Aggressive contact ^{2,3,4}	behavior involving contact between two squirrels, varies from swatting with the forepaws to wrestling and biting
Out of Sight		squirrel moves out of sight of observer or too far away for accurate categorization of behavior

Citations: ¹Thompson and Thompson 1980, ²Allen and Aspey 1987, ³Thompson 1978, ⁴Koprowski 1996