

southern flying squirrel *Glaucomys Volans*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The small, southern flying squirrel has gray-olive back fur and white belly fur. There is a flap of loose skin between the front and hind legs that makes a gliding surface when the legs are extended. The tail is broad, flat and furred. The nose is slightly upturned.

BEHAVIORS

The southern flying squirrel may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in hardwood forests near water. This mammal eats hickory nuts, acorns, seeds of other trees, fungi, fruits, bark, bird eggs, insects and young birds. It is a nocturnal animal that is alert and active all year. This squirrel is arboreal and glides from higher to lower surfaces. The tail acts like a rudder to steer as it “flies.” It does make sounds and may use echolocation. The nest may be located in a tree cavity, building, old bird nest or old squirrel nest. These squirrels may be found in communal nests in winter and possibly year round. They do not hibernate but may sleep for several consecutive days in winter. Mating occurs twice in a year. Those females mating in February and March give birth during the period late March through early May. The females that mate in July have their young in August and September. Litter size ranges from two to seven.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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