

## Red Squirrel facts

- The average body length of both male and female red squirrels is 22cm and their tails are nearly as long again, but they are about half the size of the larger gray squirrel!
- They usually weigh around 300g so less than a bag of sugar!
- A red squirrel usually lives to about 3-7 years in the wild but in captivity it is longer with ages of over 9 years having been recorded!
- Whilst the Red Squirrel's coat is usually reddish it can vary from almost white to almost black according to age, genetic variations, and the seasons!
- The Red Squirrel has impressive ear tufts which can be 3cm long in the winter, but they will be much shorter in the summer and can disappear completely.
- The beautiful bushy tail is not just for looks, it is also used for warmth, balance and even as a signaling tool!
- Red squirrels have five digits on each of their four limbs with long, strong claws which they use for climbing and they are very dexterous at handling small objects such as acorns and seeds with their front hands.
- Red squirrels usually only produce one litter a year with mating taking place in the winter or early spring with an average of about 3 kittens but if there is plenty of food available in the summer, they may produce a second litter.
- Litters are born after a 33-35 day gestation period. After 37-39 days the young will leave the nest and continued to be fed by the adults but by 45 days old, they can feed themselves.
- Squirrels are active all year round and do not hibernate.
- They build their homes in trees in a nest called a 'Drey' made from interwoven twigs with a soft lining of moss, leaves and grass and it is usually approximately the size of a football. And like us humans they sometimes have more than one home!
- Red squirrel's primary food source is seeds from plants and trees, but their diet can vary greatly throughout the year as during the autumn and winter months trees are rich with seeds and fungi. However, food can be scarcer during spring and summer and then their diet may extend to include plant shoots, bulbs, flowers, wild fruits, and berries, and even insects and occasionally bird eggs!

### Links:

[Red Squirrels.co.uk](http://RedSquirrels.co.uk) *This site provides a selection of facts about the red squirrel, its plight and a variety of resources devoted to groups who are devoted to promoting one of Britain's most rare and beautiful mammals*

[Wildlifetrusts.org](http://Wildlifetrusts.org)

[Britishtredsquirrel.org](http://Britishtredsquirrel.org)