



## Red Squirrel Facts

- The scientific name of the red squirrel is *Sciurus vulgaris*
- Red squirrels are not always red in colour! - They can also be brown, almost black, or even quite grey, and can become blonde due to bleaching by the summer sunlight
- A squirrel lives in a nest high in a tree made from woven twigs, lined with leaves, grass, moss, feathers and fur. This is called a drey, is a similar size to a football, and located against the tree trunk
- Squirrels eat a wide variety of foods including seeds, nuts, berries, flowers, buds, shoots and fruit from many trees and shrubs. They also eat fungi and insects
- Squirrels store nuts and seeds in the ground in autumn by burying them
- They can be either right or left handed while they eat a pine cone!
- Squirrels do not hibernate over winter, but do stay in their dreys during bad weather
- Squirrels moult their coat twice a year, once after winter to provide a thin coat for summer, and then in the late summer to provide a thicker and warmer coat before the colder winter weather sets in
- They lose their distinctive ear tufts once a year, when they moult in late autumn
- Young squirrels are called kittens or 'kits'
- Squirrels can have two litters of kittens each year, with 3 – 4 kittens in each litter
- Kits are born with no hair or teeth, and with their eyes closed. After around seven weeks they look just like small versions of their parents and are ready to leave the drey
- An adult red squirrel weights around is 275-350 grams. This is the same as four Mars bars or a packet of biscuits!
- The Length of a red squirrels body is 20-22 cm and its tail is 17-18 cm long
- They have four fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot and are very athletic and can hang upside down!
- Red squirrels can live to six years of age