

Red Squirrel
Tamiasciurus hudsonicus



Red Squirrel Holding the Remnants of a Pine Cone

A red squirrel can be easily identified by its reddish brown coat and white fur on the chest and stomach. It is smaller than a gray squirrel and only a little bigger than a chipmunk.

The continuous chatter of an excited squirrel seems to make its whole body quiver.

Seeds from conifer cones, nuts, seeds, mushrooms, insects, bird eggs, willow and poplar buds and catkins, berries, and young birds are among the foods eaten by the red squirrel. They store harvested green cones in a cache for the winter.

This squirrel is sitting on a pile of fallen scales from cones from which it has eaten the seeds. The pile is called a midden.

Red squirrels often build their nests of grass in the branches of trees and sometimes in tree cavities. Baby squirrels are tiny, pink and hairless when they are born, but grow up to leave their nests in about 42 days. Their enemies include coyotes, wolves, weasels, foxes, hawks, and owls.



Note the many pine cones on the ground in the area where Red Squirrels lived. Sometimes Red Squirrels are known as “Pineys”, pine squirrels, or chickarees.

Science

- Examine the photo of the Red Squirrel holding a White Pine Cone. Why might a Red Squirrel often be called a “Piney”?
- Look for clues that Red Squirrels live in a certain area. (Tracks, middens, conifer trees)
- Use the red squirrel puppet along with other animals that live in the same area. Have each tell how it fits into the ecological niche.
- There are many different kinds of squirrels. Have the red squirrel puppet compare and contrast itself with others such as gray, fox, flying, and ground squirrels.
- Red squirrels store great amounts of food for winter but also come out on sunny, cold days. Do research to learn about their activities throughout the seasons of the year. Write these on sequence cards or time lines. Have puppets talk about the activities.

Mathematics

Compare the size of Red Squirrels to the size of Gray Squirrels.

Music

- Read about the sounds various types of squirrels make. Record the sounds of squirrels in your area. Use the sounds with appropriate puppets.

Art

- Try drawing Red Squirrels you see or have seen.
- Watch the movements of a red squirrel. Try to portray some of these movements with your body or when using a squirrel puppet.
- Learn about the trees in which a red squirrel likes to live. Draw scenery showing the favorite habitat of a red squirrel. Use it with a script written for the puppet.
- Take photos of Red Squirrels and note what different kinds of things they do.

Red
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