



SPY ON SQUIRRELS

Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to head outside and see what your local tree squirrels are up to.



PHOTODISC

Keep a Record!

Helpful Things to Take Along

Date _____ Time _____

Binoculars

Location _____

Weather _____

Can you spot the following tree squirrel behaviors? Check off each one you see it.

Clever Climbing.

Squirrels are treetop climbers. With gripping feet and long tails for balance, they climb high and leap along from branch to branch.

Zigging and Zagging.

Have you seen a squirrel run out into the road in front of a car, stop, run back, run forward again, and barely escape? The routine seems foolish, but it's a trick that works well when an animal is chasing the squirrel—just not so well when the "predator" is a car.

Treasure-Seeking.

Acorns and other nuts are favorite foods for squirrels. They stash nuts in trees and bury them in the ground. Then in winter, when food is scarce, they use their sharp noses to sniff out the hidden snacks.

Chasing and Racing.

In late winter, squirrels choose mates. Males chase females and try to chase away other males.

Chatterboxing.

Squirrels chatter, click, and squeak to talk to each other. They also may flick their tails. What they are usually saying is, "Stay away. This food is mine."

Busy Building.

Squirrels make leafy nests in tree holes and on branches. If you spot what seems to be a messy pile of leaves up in a tree, it's likely a squirrel nest, called a *drey* (DRAY).

Daring Dining.

You may have seen squirrels trying all kinds of tricks to get to the seeds in a bird feeder. They don't give up easily!

RATE YOURSELF

How are your squirrel-watching skills?

NUMBER OF BOXES CHECKED:

0-3: You have a long way to climb.

4-5: You're approaching the treetops.

6-7: You're a squirrel-watching nut!

