

Pallas's Squirrel

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Callosciurus erythraeus*

AKA: belly-banded squirrel, red-bellied tree squirrel

Native to: North-eastern India, South East Asia, China and Taiwan

Habitat: Various types of woodland, including orchards and parks; prefers mixed species broad-leaved evergreen forests

The Pallas' squirrel is a medium sized red-bellied tree squirrel which is highly adaptive and opportunistic. Geographical variation is considerable with different colour forms. The upper body is usually olive-brown with the belly having a reddish appearance.

Originally from South East Asia, but due to imports for pet and ornamental trade it became established in France (1970s), Netherlands (1998) Belgium (2000s) and Italy (2007). Pallas's squirrel has also been introduced to Argentina, Hong Kong and Japan. It is not present in Northern Ireland.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Pallas's squirrel; or to release it into the environment.



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Key ID Features



Head and body is 200 – 260 mm in length



Upper body fur is olive - brown

Fur has grizzled appearance – alternate dark and light bands (agouti)

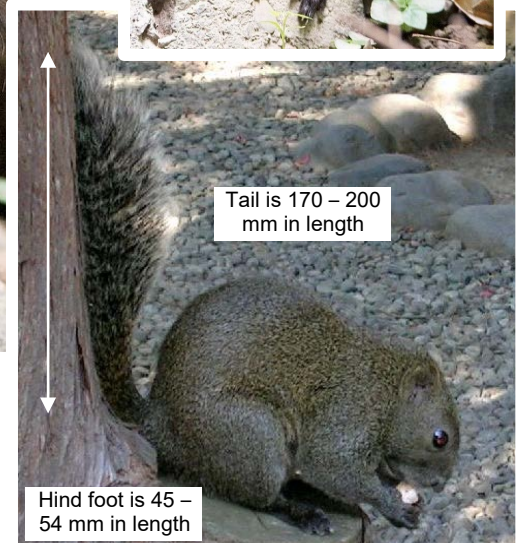
Strong claws on fingers and toes



Reddish belly



Tail is 170 – 200 mm in length



Hind foot is 45 – 54 mm in length

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Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

C. erythraeus is a highly adaptive and opportunistic species, of the 29 known introduction events 21 are documented as successful with a viable population established in the wild.

Environmental impacts

- Directly damaging the habitat by debarking trees (particularly in winter) in natural forests
- Outcompetes native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) for food and nesting sites
- Predates on bird eggs, insects and snails

Economic impacts

- Debarking trees in commercial forest plantations
- Consuming fruit in orchards
- Gnawing parts of buildings, cables and irrigation systems

Pathways

- Botanical garden and zoos
- Escapes from confinement
- Ornamental purposes and pet trade

Similar Species



S. vulgaris and *C. erythraeus* are similar sized, but difference in colour means they are easily distinguishable.



References and further reading:

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- CABI *Callosciurus erythraeus* (Pallas's squirrel) datasheet - available at <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/91200>
- Prediger, J., Horčíková, M., Hofmannová L., Sak, B., Ferrari, N., Mazzamuto, M., Romeo, C., Wauters, L., McEvoy, J., & Kváč, M. (2017). Native and introduced squirrels in Italy host different *Cryptosporidium* spp. *European Journal of Protistology*. 61. 10.1016/j.ejop.2017.09.007.
- Dozières, A., Pisanu, B., Kamenova, S., Bastelica, F., Gerriet, O. & Chapuis, J. (2015). Range expansion of Pallas's squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*) introduced in southern France: Habitat suitability and space use. *Mammalian Biology - Zeitschrift für Säugetierkunde*. 80. 18–526. 10.1016/j.mambio.2015.08.004.