



Frequently Asked Questions

Delmarva Fox Squirrel Translocations (July 2022)

Why is the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife doing this project?

Delmarva Fox Squirrels (DFS) are rare in Delaware, with only two known populations prior to this translocation effort, and this project seeks to reestablish the species in Delaware to the point where it is secure. Recovery of the species in the state will increase the chances of the long-term survival of the species and provide future generations the ability to observe and enjoy them.

What is a translocation?

Translocation (the moving of animals from robust populations to suitable and, typically, unoccupied habitats) has proven to be an important and effective tool for increasing the distribution of this species.

Who is doing the translocation?

Staff from the Division of Fish and Wildlife is leading this project but the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and a researcher from the California University of Pennsylvania are assisting.

They are partnered with the Delaware Department of Agriculture's Forest Service for the Redden State Forest Translocation and with the DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation for the Trap Pond Translocation.

When will the translocation take place?

Squirrels were released at Assawoman Wildlife Area in fall of 2020 and spring of 2021, 15 total squirrels were released at Redden State Forest in fall 2021 and spring 2022, and 15 squirrels were released at Trap Pond State Park in spring 2020. Additional squirrels will be released at Trap Pond and Redden State Forest in fall 2022 and spring 2023.

Will you do more translocations?

Yes, we plan to complete the translocations at Redden State Forest and Trap Pond State Park.

How will this effect landowners near the release sites? What if the squirrels come on my land?

There will be no impacts to properties or what people can do with their land. On November 13, 2015, DFS were removed from the federal endangered list. As has been the case for over 50 years, hunting of DFS will continue to be illegal.

Are there any laws regarding DFS in Delaware?

The hunting season for DFS remains closed so hunting is not permitted. It is illegal to import, move, possess or sell them or any part of them without a permit from the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Will this translocation affect my hunting?

No – but we ask you to be attentive to your target because the hunting season for DFS is closed.

If you are a gray squirrel hunter, please educate yourself on the differences between gray squirrels and DFS. Delmarva fox squirrels are larger, have a “silvery” coloration, shorter ears, and are more likely to run along the ground rather than jump tree to tree. Gray squirrels are smaller, have darker gray fur, almost always with some brown mixed in, and have longer ears. Please see below for help with distinguishing gray squirrels and DFS.

What do I do if I accidentally harvest a DFS?

If while hunting you accidentally harvest a DFS, immediately contact DNREC’s Natural Resource Police to self-report the incident (1-800-523-3336). While you will not be allowed to keep the DFS, self-reporting an accidental harvest usually doesn’t lead to further penalization.

What do I do if I see a DFS?

Record time and location and take a photo if you can. We would love to hear about it; 302-735-3600 or holly.niederriter@delaware.gov. Enjoy watching this special Delmarva-exclusive species!

Why do some squirrels have collars?

The collars allow us to track their movements and see what they do after we release them into their new home. Initially, we hope they stay at or near the release site so they can find each other and reproduce but, ultimately, we hope they spread out into other suitable habitats. The collars do not harm them and will eventually be removed or replaced.

What can I do to help?

Report any DFS you see and take photos when you see them! We expect them to show up on game cameras so please send those photos as well.

Identification:

Eastern gray squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)	Delmarva fox squirrel (<i>Sciurus niger cinereus</i>)
	
<p>Size: Smaller Fur: Gray; usually with brown Tail: Not as full Ears: Long, pointy Neck: Narrow</p>	<p>Size: Larger Fur: Silver-gray sometimes with markings Tail: Fluffy, longer, fuller Ears: Short, stubby Neck: Short, stocky</p>