

Ask about Ireland



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Red Squirrel



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Food: Red squirrels love cone seeds, pollen, buds and shoots. They also eat berries, nuts and fungi.

Features: The red squirrel has a long bushy tail, tufted ears, and a thick red coat in the winter. During the summer months, the coat becomes lighter in colour. The underside of the red squirrel is a cream colour.

Females produce one litter per year, sometimes two. Each litter has between 3 and 6 young and are usually born between May and August. They are blind and furless at birth, and only one in five survives the first winter.

The red squirrel has been found in Ireland since before the last Ice Age, although the species has become extinct a number of times. The gradual removal of native woodland resulted in its decline, but today its greatest threat is the grey squirrel which was introduced to Ireland in 1911. The greys out-compete the reds for food and territory, as well as carrying a virus that can kill red squirrels.

Latin: *Sciurus vulgaris*

Irish: *Iora Rua*

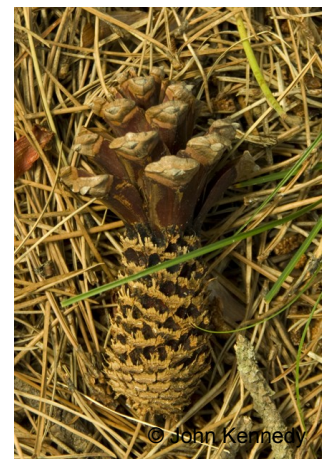
Size: The body length is about 20cm and the tail about 18cm

Months seen: All year. Contrary to popular belief, squirrels do not hibernate but store food to see them through the winter months.

Habitat: Found mainly in coniferous woodland, where the trees produce cones, but also found in broadleaf and mixed woodland.

Home: The red squirrel builds a round nest using twigs, bark, grass, and leaves high up in the trees. This is

Cone eaten by a red squirrel



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