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This article is about the squirrel family (Sciuridae) as a whole. For other uses, see [Squirrel \(disambiguation\)](#).

Squirrels

Temporal range: Late **Eocene** – Recent



Various members of the family Sciuridae

[Callosciurus prevostii](#) [Eutamias sibiricus](#) [Tamiasciurus hudsonicus](#)
[Sciurus niger](#) [Urocitellus columbianus](#) [Paraxerus cepapi](#)
[Geosciurus inauris](#) [Marmota](#) sp. [Cynomys ludovicianus](#)

Scientific classification

Kingdom: [Animalia](#)
Phylum: [Chordata](#)
Class: [Mammalia](#)
Order: [Rodentia](#)
Suborder: [Sciuromorpha](#)
Family: [Sciuridae](#)
[Fischer de Waldheim](#), 1817

Type genus

[Sciurus](#)
[Linnaeus](#), 1758

Subfamilies and tribes

- Subfamily [Ratufinae](#)
- Subfamily [Sciurillinae](#)
- Subfamily [Sciurinae](#)
 - Tribe [Sciurini](#)
 - Tribe [Pteromyini](#)
- Subfamily [Callosciurinae](#)
 - Tribe [Callosciurini](#)
 - Tribe [Funambulini](#)
- Subfamily [Xerinae](#)
 - Tribe [Xerini](#)

- Tribe [Protoxerini](#)
- Tribe [Marmotini](#)

Squirrels are members of the [family Sciuridae](#) ([/sɪˈjuːrɪdeɪ, -diː/](#)), a family that includes small or medium-sized [rodents](#). The squirrel family includes [tree squirrels](#), [ground squirrels](#) (including [chipmunks](#) and [prairie dogs](#), among others), and [flying squirrels](#). Squirrels are indigenous to the Americas, Eurasia, and Africa, and were [introduced](#) by humans to Australia.^[1] The earliest known fossilized squirrels date from the [Eocene](#) epoch, and among other living rodent families, the squirrels are most closely related to the [mountain beaver](#) and [dormice](#).^[2]

Etymology

The word *squirrel*, first attested in 1327, comes from the [Anglo-Norman](#) *esquirel* which is from the [Old French](#) *escureil*,^[3] the reflex of a [Latin](#) word *sciurus*,^[3] which was taken from the [Ancient Greek](#) word σκίουρος (*skiouros*; from σκία ('shade') and οὐρα ('tail')),^[3] referring to the long bushy tail which many of its members have.^{[4][5]} *Sciurus* is also the name of one of its *genuses*.^[5]

The [Old English](#) word for the squirrel, *ācweorna*, survived into [Middle English](#) as *aquerne*^[6] before being replaced. The Old English word is of [Common Germanic](#) origin, [cognates](#) of which are still used in other [Germanic languages](#), including the [German](#) *Eichhörnchen* (diminutive of *Eichhorn*,^[3] which is not as frequently used); the [Norwegian](#) *ikorn/ekorn*; the [Dutch](#) *eekhoorn*; the [Swedish](#) *ekorre* and the [Danish](#) *egern*.

A [group of](#) squirrels is called a "dray"^[7] or a "scurry".^[8]