

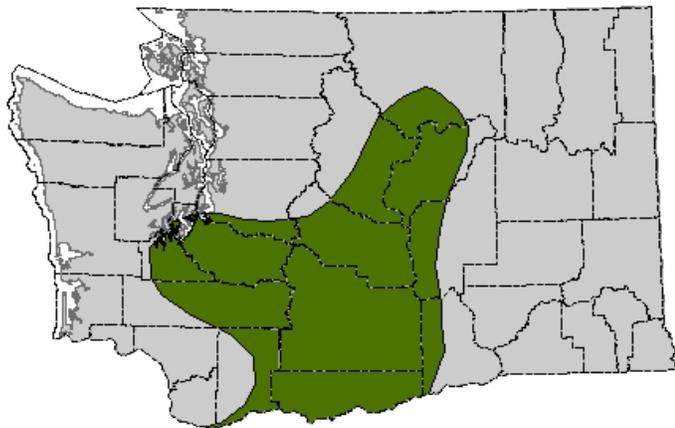
Washington State Species and Communities of Special Concern

information for family forest owners

As a good land steward, it is important to be aware of plant and animal species of special concern that may occur on your lands, and how forest management activities may affect these species. The Washington State Implementation Committee (WA SIC) for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is pleased to provide a series of factsheets on species of special concern that may occur on forested lands within Washington State. Each species factsheet includes a description of the species, habitat, range, and information on known threats to populations in Washington.



Photo of Western Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*)
www.wdfw.gov



Map source is NatureServe with following reference:
Data provided by NatureServe in collaboration with Bruce Patterson, Wes Sechrest, Marcelo Tognelli, Gerardo Ceballos, The Nature Conservancy—Migratory Bird Program, Conservation International—CABS, World Wildlife Fund—US, and Environment Canada—WILDSPACE."
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The information provided in this sheet has been compiled by the Washington SFI Implementation Committee. This species is one example of many that depend on family forest owners in Washington State for protection. To view other accounts, visit www.wdfw.wa.org or www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp, or www.natureserve.org.



Species: Western Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*)

Group: Mammal

Natural Heritage Rank: G5, S2

Legal Status: State Threatened

General Description

This species is a large tree squirrel. Adults range 18-24 inches in length including the tail. These squirrels are silver-gray with white on the abdomen and a large, fluffy tail. Young are born in the spring. This squirrel has a hoarse barking chatter call. This species eats seeds from various trees, especially acorns and pine seeds. Other foods include fungi, berries, and occasionally insects. The Western gray squirrel can be confused with the introduced Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) which is smaller, has a brown-shaded "saddle" on the back, and a smaller tail.

Habitat

This species lives in mixed pine and fir forests, often in association with oak woodlands. Structures for dens such as cavities are important for nesting.

Range in Washington

The species occurs in Pierce, Thurston, Chelan, Okanogan, Klickitat, and Yakima counties.

Threats

In Washington, the primary threat is conversion of habitat to development, especially oak woodlands in the Puget Trough region. Other threats may include habitat alteration due to forest management, fluctuating yearly supplies of seeds, and disease (e.g. mange).