



Squirrel Hunting101



Why Hunt Squirrels in Georgia?

Sustenance Hunting

In the past, squirrel was a readily and easily available food source.

Squirrel meat was both less expensive and largely abundant than more traditional sources.

Population Control

Harvesting game animals is an ethical and efficient means of maintaining healthy populations.

Squirrel Hunting Regulations

Utilizing hunter harvest records & population survey analysis, Georgia's squirrel hunting regulations are designed to:

- A. Keep the squirrel population in check
 - Ensuring squirrels do not become too abundant as well as too sparse or even endangered
- B. Provide for squirrel hunting opportunities for generations of hunters to come
- C. Ensure that squirrels do not push other similar niche species towards population decline



Identifying a Squirrel: Eastern Gray Squirrel

Characteristics

- Found statewide
- Very common
- 12 ounces to 1.5 pounds
- Little color variation

Behavior

- Food hoarder
- Climbs down head-first
- Most active during early and late hours

Habitat

Associated with both rural and urban environments. In rural environments, they are associated with mostly hardwoods as well as mixed hardwood/pine forests. In urban environments, they can be observed in backyards where bird feeders are accessible



Identifying a Squirrel: Eastern Fox Squirrel

Characteristics

- Found statewide
- Uncommon
- 1 to 3 pounds
- Much color variation

Behavior

- Foragers and hoarder
- Often on solid ground
- Most active during early and late hours

Associated with mature pine forests as well as mixed hardwood/pine forests with little to no ground cover. Also seen often on the edges of forests and forests with interspersed agricultural land.



Squirrel Patterns of Movement

Time of Day:

- *Crepuscular*: Most active during twilight or dawn and dusk

Time of Season:

- Most active in late Winter – breeding season
- Do not hibernate but will not leave nests on colder days

Consider the Weather:

- Most active in the absence of rain, preferably still and sunny weather

Hunting Sequence of Events

- Selecting location to hunt
 - Scouting
- Choosing your method of hunting

Locations to Hunt

Public Land

- GA DNR Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) – thousands of acres of huntable public lands across the state.
- It is crucial for the hunter to both know and understand the regulations that govern each specific public land area (consult GA Hunting Regulations for WMAs).

Private and/or Leased Land

- Landowners may be willing to allow hunters to use their properties for the purpose of hunting game (gardeners & farmers – pesky squirrels).
- It is crucial for the hunter to be respectful and ethical in their hunting activity on these lands towards both the landowner, and potential fellow hunters.

Scouting

Scout the property prior to hunting – pay close attention to habitat factors.

- Food Sources: Nut/Fruit Bearing Plants
- Trees with evident nesting
- Squirrel barking

Method of Hunting: Stalking

- Mobile hunting
- Walking slowly several steps at a time
- Listening for movement and/or barking



Method of Hunting: Still Hunting

- Generally immobile
 - Sitting/waiting
- Listening for approaching movement or close barking



Method of Hunting: Dog

- Mobile – trailing hunting dogs
- Responding to the dog's bark – indicating a “treed” squirrel
- Dogs do the work – hunter makes easy harvest



What Can You Use to Hunt With?

- **Rifles and Handguns**
 - .22 caliber or smaller
- **Shotguns**
 - No. 2 shot or smaller
- **Muzzleloaders**
- **Crossbows, Longbows, Recurve and Compound Bows.**

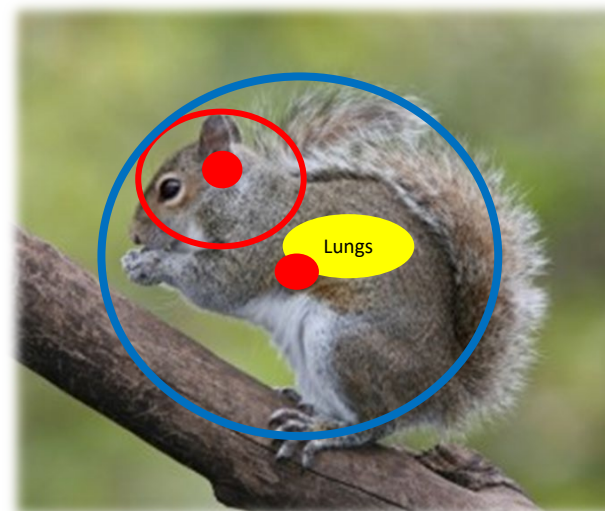
Taking the Shot

Single Projectile Shot Placement



- Aim specifically for vital areas:
 - Head or Torso
- Effective range depends on skill level

Shotshell Shot Placement



- **Under 25 yards** – Aim for Head
- **Over 25 yards** – Aim Mid-Body
- Effective range no more than 50 yards

Special Considerations for Hunting

Clothing

- Camouflage: green-based camo during early season and gray-based camo during later season
- Weather: stay warm and dry
- Safety: 500 square inches of Blaze Orange above the belt



Equipment

- Firearm: beginners may favor a shotgun especially during early season – rifle hunters may favor a scope
- Trained Dogs: while not necessary, a squirrel dog may make the hunt more enjoyable (Feist, Terrier, Cur, and Hound)

Pittman Robertson Act

- Pittman Robertson Act is an excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment
 - the excise tax is set by law at 11% of the wholesale price for long guns and ammunition and 10% for handguns. It is paid by manufacturers, producers, and importers and applies to all commercial sales and imports, whether their purpose is hunting, sport shooting, or personal defense. This tax is handled by the Department of the Treasury, which turns the funds over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for apportionments to states.
- This money goes toward Wildlife Restoration only

How are Pittman-Robertson Funds Distributed?

- 1) \$8 million is dedicated to Enhanced [Hunter Education](#) programs, including the construction or maintenance of public target ranges.
- 2) \$3 million is set aside for projects that require cooperation among the states.
- 3) One-half of the excise tax collected on handguns is set aside for Basic Hunter Education programs.

The remainder of the trust fund is then divided in half with 50 percent apportioned to states based on the land area of the state in proportion to the total land area of the country. The remaining 50 percent is apportioned based on the number of individual paid hunting license holders in the state in proportion to the national total.

Wildlife and Sport Restoration Program

- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) works with states, insular areas and the District of Columbia to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, their habitats, and the hunting, sport fishing and recreational boating opportunities they provide. Insuring they will be available for generations to come.
- The Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program provides oversight and/or administrative support for grant programs.