

General tree squirrel season to open September 10

September 8, 2022



California's 2022-2023 general tree squirrel season will be open from Saturday, Sept. 10, through Sunday, Jan. 29, 2023.

Tree squirrels may be taken only in open zones during the open season and in observance of the shooting hours for resident small game, which is one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset.

A map of the state's tree squirrel hunt zones (PDF) can be found on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website, along with the full tree squirrel regulations.

Four types of tree squirrels are game species in California. The Western gray squirrel and the Douglas squirrel are both native to California while the Eastern fox squirrel and the Eastern gray squirrel have been introduced and not native to the state.

These tree squirrels can be hunted under authority of a hunting license in California and no other validations are required. To learn more about how to hunt for these squirrels and their distributions, habitat and patterns, watch the "Hunting California Tree Squirrels" recorded webinar on CDFW's YouTube channel.

A fifth species of tree squirrel, the Northern flying squirrel, is not a game species and may not be taken. Northern flying squirrels are small tree squirrels that are native to the boreal forests of North America and can be found as far south as the Sierra Nevada. They are seldom encountered due to their nocturnal nature and preference for mature forest habitats with complex canopy structure.

Tree squirrel population levels fluctuate from year to year based on prevailing weather conditions and the annual production of nuts, acorns and seeds for forage.

National forests provide some of the best opportunity to hunt tree squirrels in California.

Bureau of Land Management lands and CDFW wildlife areas may also provide opportunity for squirrel hunting. As a friendly reminder, nonlead shot is required when taking any wildlife with a firearm anywhere in California. Please plan accordingly. For more information, please see the CDFW nonlead ammunition web page.