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The Great Chicago Squirrel Census UIC prof leading Chicago effort

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Updated 10:20 AM CDT, Tue, May 5, 2009

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Getty Images

And how many bathrooms do you have in your home, Mr. Squirrel?

Calling the Midwest a "[squirrel hot spot](#)," a local researcher is embarking on what we'll call the Great [Chicago](#) Squirrel Census - and he needs your help.

[Steve Sullivan](#), an "urban ecologist" at the [University of Illinois-Chicago](#), is calling on all Chicagoans to participate by logging squirrel sightings on [his Project Squirrel website](#).

"Count the squirrels near your house as you leave for work, count the ones you see on your lunch break," [Sullivan](#) says.

"In addition to being interesting animals to watch, squirrels can tell us a lot about our local environment and how it is changing," the site says under photos of a grey squirrel in Lincoln Park and a fox squirrel in [Brookfield](#). "To gain this insight, we must gather data about as many individual squirrels in as many places as possible. This is where you come in; you can be a Citizen Scientist."

The form where citizens report their squirrel sightings asks for their zip code, along with observations such as if dogs and cats are abundant at the location of a sighting and if squirrels are seen "obtaining" food in the area from garbage, bird feeders, or people.

You can also share your [squirrel stories](#) and [squirrel photos](#) (like one up there now with the caption "A red squirrel stops for a quick snack.")

Project Squirrel actually got its start in 1997, but the citizen census initiative just [started](#) in March.

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