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Residents asked to count squirrels

(<http://www.southtownstar.com/news/1558660,squirrel-counting-0505.article>)

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Scientists attempting to count the number of squirrels per ZIP code in the Chicago area are asking people to record sightings of the rodents on a Web site.

The Chicago Academy of Sciences, Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and University of Illinois at Chicago are asking for contributions to www.projectsquirrel.org. Urban ecologist Steve Sullivan leads the effort and says the Midwest is a "squirrel hot spot."

Researchers say the data offers insight into to the rodents' behavior and the overall ecology of the region.

People visiting the Web site are taken through a checklist that asks for the date, time, location and other information. But the researchers are also asking area residents to report when they see no squirrels, as that can mean something too.

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