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Fox Squirrel Collects



A fox squirrel runs with a bit of food on Thursday (Oct. 26) in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.



The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) notes that the fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) weighs from one to three pounds, and exhibits color variations which range from a buff color to gray, and in some instances black.

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The under parts are usually lighter, and typical specimens have white noses and ears with black faces and feet, the FWC notes.



They are noted for their long, bushy tails and for their strong hind legs which allows them to leap easily from place to place, the FWC notes.

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The fox squirrel probably was named after the fox because of its comparatively large size and peculiar way of running along the ground which gives the appearance of a small fox, the FWC notes.



Of the four subspecies found in Florida, the FWC notes, two are listed as protected species. Sherman's Fox Squirrel, *Sciurus niger shermani*, a species of special concern, is found in the open piney woods of Central and Northeastern Florida. The Big Cypress Fox Squirrel *Sciurus niger avicennia*, a threatened species is found from the Everglades region, in Lee county, to the southern part of Dade county. The diet of the fox squirrel consists primarily of plant material such as nuts, seeds, fungi, fruit and buds, the FWC notes. Pine seed is their favorite, the FWC notes.

Photos by Jeff M. Hardison © Oct. 29, 2017 at 7:37 a.m.