

Introduction and establishment of the Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in Nova Scotia, Canada

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The eastern gray squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis*, is one of the most recognized and abundant sciurids in North America. Historically restricted to eastern North America, eastern gray squirrels are continuing to expand their geographic range. Human-sponsored introductions have also greatly facilitated the range extension of eastern gray squirrels across North America, often resulting in significant negative impacts to the ecological integrity of native ecosystems. Since the 1930s, apparently isolated sightings of eastern gray squirrels in Nova Scotia, Canada have been attributed to captive releases or escapes. Despite reports of multiple introduction events over the past decades, many scientists believed the species had not become established in the province. However, recent trapping efforts have demonstrated otherwise, and have

resulted in the first (3) voucher specimens of this species recorded for Nova Scotia. These vouchers provide evidence that the eastern gray squirrel is now present as a wild breeding mammal in Nova Scotia. We discuss the biological impacts of this highly adaptable sciurid in non-native habitats. Although the future ecological impact of the eastern gray squirrel in Nova Scotia is unknown, it seems likely that this species will continue to expand its range and increase in abundance in the province in the decades ahead.