

SQUIRREL/S IN YOUR LOFT?

Please do not phone us as it's not our area of expertise.

However, here is some general advice.

Female squirrels usually have their young in February/March or late summer.

It would be wise to try to ascertain if there are babies and how small they are. If they are very small, gradually and gently scaring mother off may do the trick, in that she may decide to take her babies with her. There is a photographic guide to the age of young squirrels under the Squirrels in Distress heading of our home page.

You could put food outside to tempt the squirrels out so you can see how old the babies are. Once they become more or less independent of mother, scare her (and them if they are still there) on a fine, sunny day and hopefully they will soon find a new home. They will be less inclined to leave if the weather is bad.

When youngsters get to 12-14 weeks of age, they will probably leave of their own accord or be chased off by mother, although the mother (and one or two others) may stay.

To scare the squirrels, prolonged bright light and loud music will probably do the trick. Try some heavy metal music with plenty of bass - not Classic FM! I have tried an electric rodent repeller, but it didn't work with rats, so I doubt they'd work for squirrels. Squirrels would far less like to have to listen to Motorhead for a long period of time.

Start early in the morning (about 8pm when squirrels are usually active) and keep the lights/music going for the rest of the day (you may need to warn the neighbours) and hopefully squirrel will find another home. If there are babies, it is best to make sure the mother takes them with her, or you will be left with the orphans which are hard to keep alive. If that happens, please hit the Found a Baby Squirrel button on this website.

When I had adult squirrels in my loft I managed to set up a trap in my garden using an old bird cage baited with nuts (although many hardware shops sell humane squirrel traps), and I caught the squirrels one by one with a strategically placed length of string, to close the cage door and released them in a safe spot a little later.

Failing that, phone a local pest control firm and tell them that you don't want them to harm the squirrel/s, and you want to personally either watch them release the squirrel/s elsewhere (where there already an existing colony) or if they complain tell them you will take their humane trap somewhere and do the release yourself. If they don't agree, don't book them. And don't trust them to release the squirrel without you overseeing it happen. Find a place at least half a mile away, where other squirrels live, so you know there will be food and shelter for the relocated squirrel/s.

Pest controllers may try to intimidate you by saying that it is illegal to release a grey squirrel into the wild in this country. Tell them you are not releasing it; you are MOVING it! Let's face it, the police can't cope with all the burglars and thugs on our streets, so I doubt they'll have time to stick you behind bars for relocating a squirrel a mile or two!

Once the loft is clear of squirrels – and not before – block up the hole/s. Good luck!

By the way, if you do find this advice useful and can spare a small donation, we would be immensely grateful and it would help us carry on the work we do. Squirrel Rescue is run by one small family in their spare time and sadly very few

people ever think of sending a donation when we have helped them. Unlike the RSPCA we don't have any public funding and just about get by paying for most things ourselves, and with the help of a few kind souls.