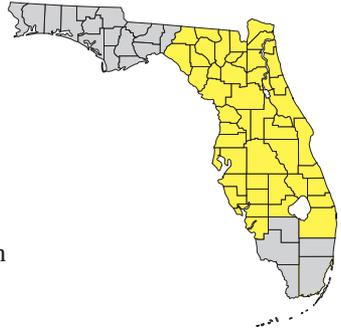


SHERMAN'S FOX SQUIRREL

Sciurus niger shermani



Order:	Rodentia
Family:	Sciuridae
FNAI Ranks:	G5T3/S3
U.S. Status:	None
FL Status:	Species of Special Concern



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Description: A large (23 - 28 in. = 600 - 700 mm) tree squirrel with highly variable dorsal fur color ranging from nearly all black (uncommon) to silver, with variations of black over silver and silver over black. Underside is tan. Head is generally black; ears and muzzle are often white. Tail is long, nearly the length of the head and torso. Nests are usually in oak trees and are constructed of oak leaves and Spanish moss.

Similar Species: Gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is smaller (less than 19 in. = 500 mm).

Habitat: Sandhills (high pine), pine flatwoods, and pastures and other open, ruderal habitats with scattered pines and oaks. Depends on a variety of oak trees for seasonal food and nest material. Longleaf pine cones and seeds are important foods.

SHERMAN'S FOX SQUIRREL *Sciurus niger shermani*

Seasonal Occurrence: Active year-round.

Florida Distribution: Subspecies range was originally defined as running from the Aucilla River east to Nassau County and south to the Caloosahatchee River in southwestern Florida and to Miami-Dade County along the east coast. Some researchers extend the range westward to the Apalachicola River. Southern fox squirrel (*S. n. niger*) occurs throughout most of the panhandle; mangrove fox squirrel (*S. n. avicennia*) occurs southwest of Lake Okeechobee.

Range-wide Distribution: Peninsular Florida (excluding southwestern portion) north to central Georgia.

Conservation Status: Although present in several conservation areas, Sherman's fox squirrel has been eliminated from much of its former habitat as a result of conversion to pine plantation, row crops, or development.

Protection and Management: Preserve longleaf pine/wiregrass communities, particularly sandhills. Burn habitat every two to five years (April - July if possible) to control shrubby vegetation and maintain park-like conditions.

Selected References: Brown 1997, Hall 1981, Humphrey (ed.) 1992, Whitaker 1996.