



Klamath Network Featured Creature

December 2013

Northern Flying Squirrel

(*Glaucomys sabrinus*)

General Description:

The Northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) is about ten inches long from nose to tail. Though the flying squirrel does not actually fly, it has a fold of skin (called a patagium) that stretches between its front and rear legs, allowing the squirrel to glide from tree to tree. Large round eyes help this nocturnal creature see at night, as it searches for food. The flying squirrel has soft tawny brown to grey fur above, and white fur on its belly, and a flat tail that acts a rudder while in "flight".

Habitat and Ecology:

Northern Flying squirrels are generalists, inhabiting dense conifer or mixed conifer and deciduous forests. Preferred conditions are cool mature forests with abundant standing or fallen dead trees.

Life Cycle:

Flying squirrels breed throughout the spring, making nests in clumps of twigs, moss, and bark, woodpecker holes, or abandoned bird nests. After a gestation period of 40 days females give birth to a litter of two to five young, and cares for them until they learn to glide at three months.



Behavior:

Flying squirrels are nocturnal, and spend considerable time on the ground foraging for food. Their diet consists of active throughout the year. They are social animals and may share nests, and live in groups of 8 or more.

Distribution:

Glaucomys sabrinus has a wide range in North America. It is found Alaska and across Canada, throughout the Northwestern United States, as well as the Appalachian Mountains from New England to North Carolina.

Where to Find in the Klamath Network Parks:

Northern flying squirrels can be found in all of the Klamath Network Parks, except for Lava Beds National Park.

References and Further Reading:

<http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/northernflyingsquirrel.htm>