

Stop Squirrel Slander

Comment [SR1]: Neato title

How many times has your day been brightened by the appearance of a lovable, fuzzy fox squirrel? The fox squirrel is an intelligent and adaptable mammal who has flourished in their close (and completely benevolent) relationship to human beings. Interesting facts about the fox squirrel include that these fuzzy beasts are, in fact, “living fossils” who have not changed in millions of years, which speaks to their capacity for adaptability. These amiable little arboreal mammals wouldn’t hurt a fly. But recently, the fox squirrel’s very existence has been threatened by a number of factors, including deforestation and small predators. But worse, they have been subject to malicious generalizations by irresponsible composition teachers, and others, who make such ridiculous claims as that they are in the habit of biting people “and latching on,” or that they eat birds (Adams). The vast majority of squirrels would never engage in such behaviors, as shown by scientific studies about their diet, habits, and territorial behavior.

Comment [SR2]: Introductory material

Comment [SR3]: General proposition of thesis

Comment [SR4]: Argument 1

The first reason that squirrels are largely harmless is shown in scientific studies about their dietary behavior under times of scarcity, where many animals would turn on their own and other species. John L. Koprowski, a professor in the Department of Systematics and Ecology at the University of Kansas, has made a detailed study of squirrel dietary practices in his article “Response of Fox Squirrels and Gray Squirrels to Late Summer-Early Fall Food Shortage”. Koprowski begins by noting that fox squirrels “depend heavily on the reproductive tissues of deciduous trees” for their food (367). Thus, Koprowski, basing this statement on three other studies conducted in 1945, 1981, or 1968, would point out with reliable scientific authority that squirrels do not, in fact, depend heavily on birds or the flesh of humans, onto which they might bite and latch on

Comment [SR5]: Transitional part of sentence reminding about general proposition and argument 1

Comment [SR6]: Introduction of source 1

Comment [SR7]: Integration of Source 1

Comment [SR8]: Citation of source 1

for food, even under times of shortage. Similar to Koprowski, who studied squirrels in Kansas, Leroy J. Korschgen has studied the dietary habits of Fox Squirrels in Missouri and agrees with Koprowski. In Korschgen's article, "Foods of Fox and Gray Squirrels in Missouri," Korschgen documents how he opened the stomachs of over 1,260 Fox Squirrels and examined their content (260). The study found not one example of either bird or human flesh, further demonstrating squirrel harmlessness. Koprowski and Korschgen, therefore, agree that the primary food of squirrels is, in fact, plant matter, and neither cite squirrels as consuming bird or human flesh. This is only the first reason that any assertion that squirrels are "vicious" is unsupportable.

Comment [SR9]: Explanation of source 1

Comment [SR10]: Transitional phrase before verb of attribution

Comment [SR11]: Comparing with source 2

Comment [SR12]: Verb of attribution

Comment [SR13]: Introduce source 2

Comment [SR14]: Quote, cite source 2

Comment [SR15]: Explain relevance of source 2 to argument

Comment [SR16]: Synthesizing statement showing how the promise made in the Verb of Attribution is true

Comment [SR17]: Transition out