



Mearns's Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus mearnsi*)

Size: Head and body length, 18.8 - 21.4 cm **Weight:** 220 - 360 g **Habitat:** Open conifer forests of Mexico's Baja California region **Surviving number:** Unknown



Photographed by Claudio Contreras Koob

WILDLIFE AS CANON SEES IT

Long time no see. Endemic to the dry forests of a single mountain range, Mearns's squirrel has been separated from other members of its genus for nearly 12,000 years. During this long isolation, marked differences have developed. Unlike its close relatives, it is non-territorial, nests almost exclusively in tree cavities, and does not build and defend food stores. Instead, it simply caches pine and fir tree seeds and other food items in

branches. Foraging consumes over half the squirrel's time as it scrambles to deal with deforestation and possibly competition with the introduced eastern gray squirrel. Could time be running out?

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