

LETTERS

HOW DO SQUIRRELS CARRY THEIR YOUNG?

I am providing two illustrations to show that American Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) may carry their young differently than European Red Squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris*) do.

I have not seen the American Red Squirrel perform this action, but it was observed and described to me in detail by a country neighbour, who saw a squirrel which had nested in a bird nest box move its young to a more spacious spot. As my sketch suggests, the youngster is clinging to the belly of the adult with its head below the adult's crotch (see figure 1).

The European squirrel carries its young by its mouth, aided by a pair of the youngster's legs clinging to the parent's neck (see figure 2). Bears (and I expect some other carnivores) also carry their young partly in their mouths. The illustration of the Euro-

pean squirrel is reproduced here from: T. Bourliere. 1960. *Natural History of Mammals*, 2nd Edition. Alfred Knaps, New York. p. 178.

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Figure 2. European Red Squirrel with young in its mouth.



Figure 1. Adult American Red Squirrel with young clinging to its belly.

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