

# WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®

A Program of conservation VISIONS®

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QUARTERLY UPDATE

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MARCH 2020

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*Initial findings from the Wild Harvest Initiative® Wild Meat Sharing and Consumption Survey reveal that 97.7% of successful hunters share their wild harvested meat!*

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**Between 2014 and 2016, squirrels were harvested in 28 American states and 6 Canadian provinces**

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## **Harvest Profile – North American Squirrel Species**

### *Harvest in the United States*

Squirrels are harvested in 28 American states and six Canadian provinces. Most jurisdictions report their harvests as belonging to the broad “squirrel” family (*Sciuridae*), which may include tree squirrels, ground squirrels, chipmunks, marmots, flying squirrels, and prairie dogs, among other small or medium-size rodents. Some, however, disaggregate their data according to distinct species. The Wild Harvest Initiative® Database reports four distinct squirrel species harvested in the US and Canada: Abert’s squirrel

(*Sciurus aberti*), Fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), Gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), and Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*).

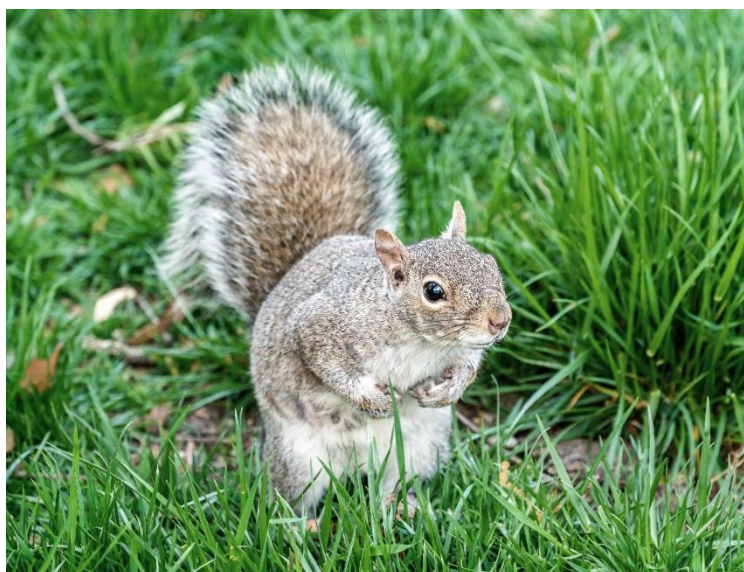
Between 2014 and 2016, a total of 16,162,719 squirrels were harvested in the US and Canada. This includes 8,430,369 in 2014/15 and 7,732,350 in 2015/16. The total weight of this live harvest was approximately 20.2 million pounds and the dressed weight of the harvest was over 11.2 million pounds.

Based on typical consumption behaviors associated with the harvest of squirrel meat, the 2014-16 harvest represented nearly 7.9 million pounds of meat, with an average of

3.9 million pounds per harvest season. This translates to a total of 31.4 million meals (based on a 4-oz serving) or 15.7 million meals annually.

### *Conservation Status*

Although the four distinct squirrel species reported in the WHI database are native to North America, many of them were introduced across provincial and state borders to new regions in the 19th and early 20th century. These introductions were motivated both by a desire to have additional small game hunting opportunities, as well as the pleasure of seeing these creatures more widely distributed – including in urban parks.



## Species Profile: Gray Squirrel

- Scientific name: *Sciurus carolinensis*
- They are widely distributed across Canada and the US and have adapted well to urban and peri-urban environments.
- Gray squirrels particularly enjoy eating berries, seeds, acorns and bark.
- They are known to hide food in various locations and are able to remember thousands of hidden food caches.
- There are 2 species of Grey Squirrel found in the US and Canada: the Eastern Grey Squirrel and Western Grey Squirrel

Squirrels are very resilient when introduced to new areas, with only a few individuals needed to establish a sustainable population. In some instances, new squirrel populations have proven to be too successful, ultimately resulting in their classification as invasive in certain parts of the US and Canada.

There is little historic data on the population trends of squirrels.

Broadly speaking, most squirrel species in North America enjoy a comfortable population size, especially those species that have adapted well to living in urban environments, such as the Eastern Grey Squirrel. There are, however, pockets of sub-species that have faced population declines, primarily as a result of habitat destruction. For example, the Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel was one of the very first

species to be listed by the US as “endangered” in 1967. Their population suffered on account of habitat loss resulting from forest clearing and development. Fortunately, efforts to rebuild the population through relocations proved successful and after reaching a population of around 20,000, the species was officially removed from the endangered list in 2015.




Squirrel Harvests in the United States and Canada (2014/15-2015/16)			
	Live Weight of Harvest	Consumable Weight of Harvest	Number of Meals (based on 4oz serving)
Canada	35,013 lbs	13,533 lbs	54,132
United States	20,213,103 lbs	7,843,832 lbs	31,375,329

Figure 1: Squirrel harvests in the US and Canada by weight and number of meals (2014-16)

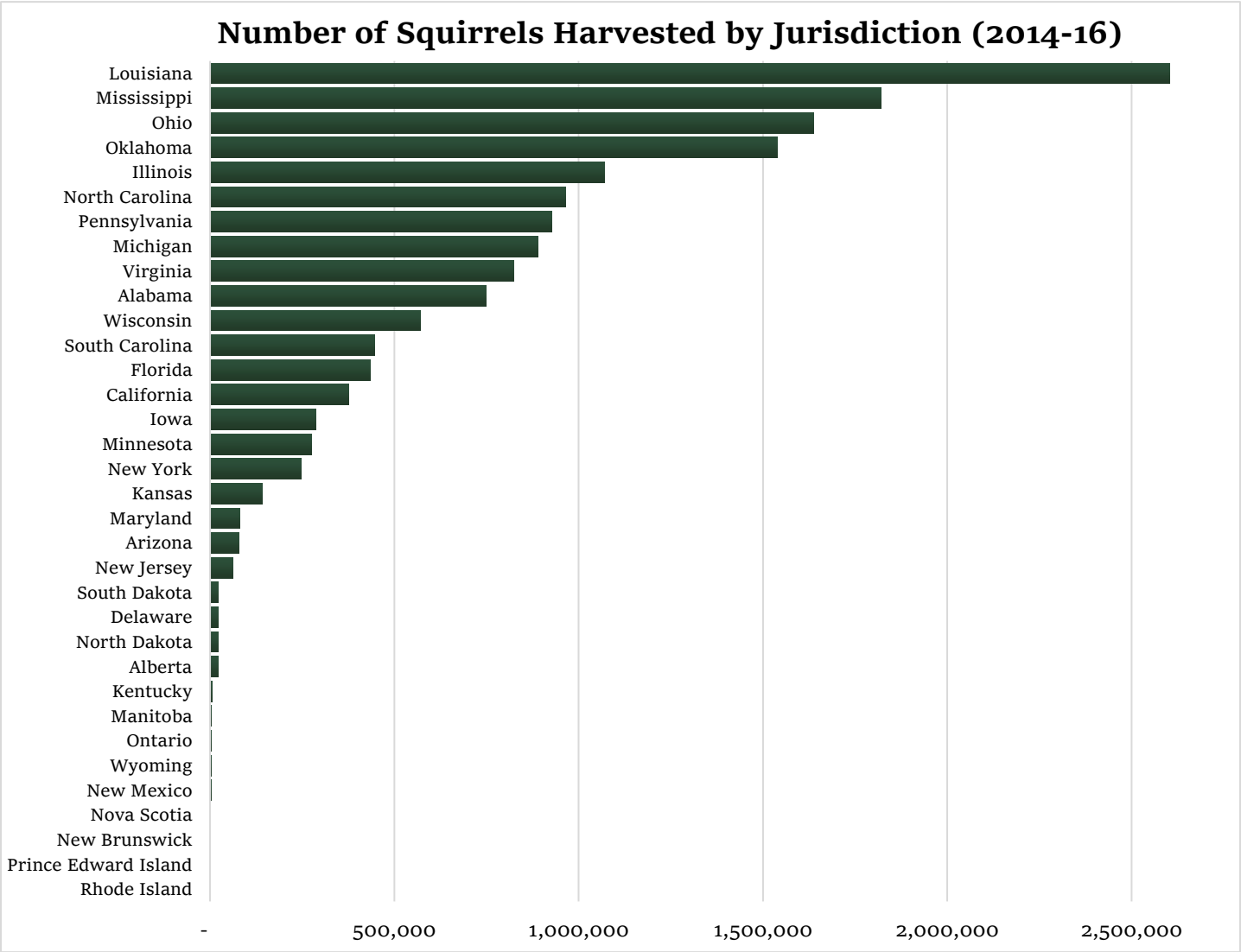


Figure 2: Number of squirrels harvested by jurisdiction in the US and Canada (2014-16)

			
<b>Gray Squirrel</b> <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	<b>Fox Squirrel</b> <i>Sciurus niger</i>	<b>Red Squirrel</b> <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	<b>Abert's Squirrel</b> <i>Sciurus aberti</i>
Live weight: 18.0 oz Dressed weight: 9.5 oz Consumable weight: 7.0 oz	Live weight: 26.8 oz Dressed weight: 15.5 oz Consumable weight: 10.6 oz	Live weight: 7.0 oz Dressed weight: 3.9 oz Consumable weight: 2.8 oz	Live weight: 21.8 oz Dressed weight: 12.0 oz Consumable weight: 8.4 oz

## Squirrel Species harvested in the US and Canada (2014-2016)

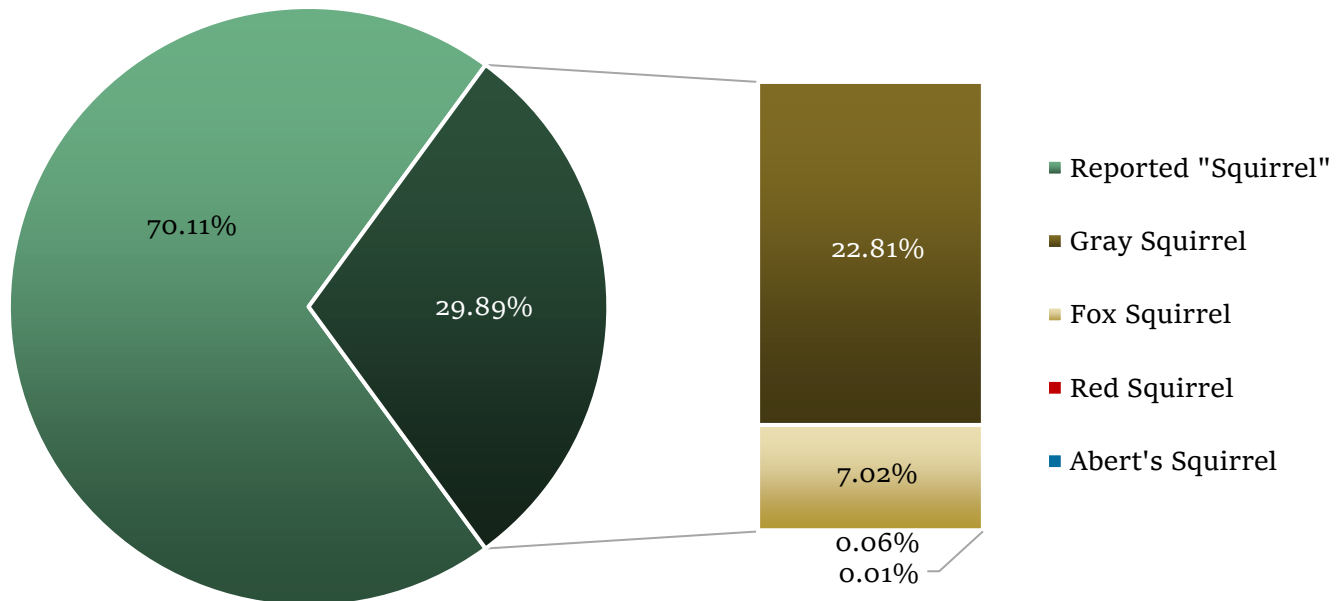


Figure 1 Squirrel species harvested in the US and Canada by species (2014-16)

## PROGRESS REPORTING

### Wild Harvest Initiative® Database

#### Hunting and Angling Harvest Data Analyses

#### Quality Assurance Testing for Species' Weights

We conducted a thorough review of species' live, dressed, and consumable weights, including reference sources and derived calculations, between November 2019 and February 2020. During this process, which was undertaken in order to ensure the accuracy and credibility of all WHI figures, some weights were refined. All reference materials have been stored in the Wild Harvest Initiative® Database.

#### New Personnel

Two new interns were hired by Conservation Visions in early February and will begin their employment during the next quarter.

Each will assist with aspects of Wild Harvest Initiative® programming. The first holds a Master of Science in Marine Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries; she will be working primarily on analyses related to recreational angling data. The second individual holds a Master of Arts in International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. He will assist with a variety of research priorities, as well as the WHI communications program.

#### Economic Valuation

Data collection regarding the economic value of wild harvested meat and fish is underway.

A full analysis on the economic value of fish species harvested in the US and Canada is planned for the summer of 2020. This will involve the finalization of an economic equivalence framework and a full compilation of species-related market values.

Once an economic equivalence framework has been developed for both meat and fish, a full assessment regarding the replacement value and overall economic impact of wild harvest activities will commence.

#### Database Updates

##### Backups

A new and more secure back-up process for The Wild Harvest Initiative® Database was created by Triware Technologies during the past quarter and is now functioning well.

##### Additions

Economic replacement costs will be integrated into the WHI database once they are available in the coming months.

### Wild Meat Sharing and Consumption Index

Conservation Visions has received an initial draft report from Glenn Luther, our contracted expert, regarding the



findings of the first Wild Harvest Initiative® Wild Meat Sharing and Consumption Survey, which was implemented in Texas. This report revealed exciting findings regarding the magnitude of wild meat sharing that happens in Texas: 97.7% of successful hunters were found to share, on average, 42.9% of their wild harvested meat!

The draft is currently being reviewed and a final report will be shared with Wild Harvest Initiative® partners during the next quarter.

## **Wild Harvest Initiative® Partnership Alliance**

### *Welcoming New Partners*

Partnership discussions are ongoing with a number of entities including (but not limited to) Browning, MTN Ops, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

## **Communications**

### *Website*

The new WHI standalone website launched on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020! The launch was accompanied by a mail blast and press release. The public is now able to access and contribute to this site, making it a place for people

to actively engage in discussions related to the importance and impact of wild harvesting activities. Be sure to share the site:

[thewildharvestinitiative.com](http://thewildharvestinitiative.com)

### *Marketing Materials*

In December 2019, Conservation Visions made Wild Harvest Initiative® posters available to all partners for use during conventions.

A new brochure was also finalized, featuring a new logo. This was designed by Revolve Branding and Marketing, the same company that designed our new standalone website; thus, it maintains the same esthetic as the site.

Conservation Visions is currently working on a series of Species Factsheets to share with partners. These factsheets will be a one-stop-shop for species-specific data related to wild harvest and conservation data.

### *Podcast*

In February 2020, the Nevada Wild Podcast released two episodes featuring interviews with Shane Mahoney. In Part 2 of their series, Shane discusses the Wild Harvest

Initiative®, what it represents and why it is important. To listen to these podcasts, please visit the link below:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ndow-presents-the-nevada-wild-podcast/id1367273354>

### *New Films*

In February, DSC Foundation released a new film about wild harvest and the Wild Harvest Initiative®. The film can be viewed at the following link and we ask that Partners share as widely as possible.

<https://www.facebook.com/thedscfoundation/videos/539919950205828/>

We also want to draw your attention to a new film produced by WHI Alliance Member Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in partnership with Alliance Members Bass Pro Shops, Sitka and others. A Piece of History – Unlocking 26,000 Acres of Public Land may be viewed at:

<https://www.rmef.org/elk-network/a-piece-of-history-unlocking-26000-acres-of-public-land>

Please watch and share

## THE WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE® PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE



AMERICA'S OPTICS AUTHORITY



Not pictured are Sean Olmstead and Richard A. "Dick" Corbett

