

Removing Unwanted Houseguests



For Atlanta homeowners, the winter months may bring some unexpected houseguests – and no, we aren't talking about Cousin Eddie or Aunt Louise. With breeding season now upon us, adult female squirrels are looking for shelter to have their litters, and your attic may seem like the perfect spot.

If you hear noises in your attic and you're unsure of the source, take a look around the outside of your home for points of entry. If there are visible openings around the roofline, squirrels may have gotten inside. These can be both manmade or forced entry points, as squirrels will often chew their way in.

Once inside, these rodents will chew on anything in sight – wood, wire, pipe – and make their home in your attic's insulation. Damage can be costly to repair, and squirrels' droppings can create bacterial concerns and obvious odor issues.

If you suspect that squirrels have taken residence in your attic, the first and only step should be to call a wildlife specialist to handle their removal. Rodents are not an easy "pest" to remove, and removal should not be attempted by homeowners.

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Squirrels must be trapped and removed, and then repairs made to seal all entry points and prevent the rodents from returning. Many pest control companies that specialize in wildlife removal will handle these repairs and guarantee that no animal will re-enter through their repairs.

Squirrels have an intense homing instinct, which means females will return to the same place to have each litter, and once their babies are grown those females will do the same. This can go on for generations, with each female having two litters per year of between two and six babies each.

In addition, homeowners should ensure that trees adjacent to the home are properly trimmed, as overhanging branches provide access to the roof.

While the holidays are often a busy time, taking the necessary steps to address a squirrel problem will help ensure that your home is filled with only invited guests this holiday season.

*—Stewart Cloud, Director of Wildlife Services
Skyline Pest Solutions*



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