

HARVARD NEWS

Tourists Discover New Species of Squirrel in Harvard Yard

CAMBRIDGE, MA — According to the Harvard office of press releases, a group of foreign tourists announced the discovery of a new species of squirrel in Harvard Yard last week. Although the tourists were unable to catch any specimens, they provided ample photographic evidence of the distinctive creatures. "These rodents have apparently evolved an amazing capacity to solicit food from tourists while eluding capture," explained esteemed Harvard Biology professor, Edward O. Wilson. "None of us have been able to get our hands on them either. Those suckers are quick! Make one move, and they just flip out and scamper up a tree."



In honor of their discovery, the group was commissioned to name the new species, deciding on the rather narcissistic but accurate *Sciurus turistas*. "People will finally have to acknowledge the essential role of tourists to the ecology of Harvard Yard," commented Roger Peoples, Public Relations Manager of "Tourists Looking For Ways To Be Associated With Harvard". Some group members have even begun to demand full professorships in the Organismic and Evolutionary Biology department. While new faculty appointments are unlikely, thousands of amateur tourists now feel vindicated for what has often been criticized as an excessive fascination with the most successful permanent residents of the Yard. "The people at Harvard always thought we should be focusing more on the rich history, architecture, and lore of Harvard Yard. Only we realized the true importance of *Mammalia Rodentia Sciuridae*," says Peoples. "Last week's announcement finally brings long awaited and well deserved legitimacy to the thousands upon thousands of tourists around the world who have spent most of their time in the Yard sitting perfectly still with a piece of donut in their outstretched hand, or with a camera poised just for the right moment."

Indeed, Harvard researchers have requested pictures of the bushy-tailed critters from tourists all over the world, with early reports indicating at least a dozen new species of squirrel in and around the Yard previously unknown to science. "It turns out that the co-evolutionary relationships between members and visitors of the Harvard community have been much stronger than we ever thought," according to an anonymous faculty member who provided HSP with a copy of the working

paper which tentatively lists new species for which there is preliminary photographic evidence. Despite the potential legal complications, we include selected members of the list below, with brief descriptions, in the name of science:

Sciurus photogenicus: Most well-documented on the list; habitat ranges over the best-lit parts of campus; instinctively sits up in a humorous pose when cameras are in the area.

Sciurus extremely cutus: A possible sub-species of photogenicus; flawless cheek-bone structure; bushiness of tail conforms to the Golden Ratio.

Sciurus legacyus: Descendents of former inhabitants of the Yard for whom there are permanently reserved nests in many of the trees. Apparently resented by other members of the squirrel community who feel they haven't proven their "evolutionary mettle" in order to earn spots in the Yard.

Sciurus intelligentsia: Spotted wearing glasses and sitting near windows during colloquia. Missing library books found intact in their nests.

Sciurus elitus: Scornful of the other squirrels' unsophisticated tastes. *The New Yorker* lists a subscription delivered to the bushes where this species has been most sighted.

Sciurus photographicanus: Shocked tourists found the tables turned when these squirrels started taking snaps of them!



Sciurus promiscuousus: Always found fornicating with other squirrels of all species; seen wearing beer goggles.

Sciurus all-naturalus: Eats only organic nuts (whatever that means). Destroys any genetically engineered acorns.

Sciurus medicalis: Found on the Longwood campus. Suffer from feelings of estrangement and alienation. Evolved due to reproductive isolation after ancestors migrated from main campus as stowaways on free shuttle bus.

Sciurus chipmunkus: Alvin, Simon, Theodore. (Who Knew!?).

The Harvard OEB department has thus far refused to publish these findings, claiming they need further documentation, financing, and better dental coverage. A \$5 million NSF grant request is in the works for a project that may finally elucidate the mysteries of vertebrate speciation in modern environments. While some hope that it will explain once and for all how so many small, furry, mammals have come to dominate elite sectors of academia, others simply hope it will explain why there are so many fucking squirrels littering university campuses across the nation.

