

# Squirrels still safe in Elon, not Gibsonville

Nick Zanetti  
Reporter

In an effort to tame the squirrel populations in Gibsonville, the town's animal control officer William Gilchrist has issued permits to some residents to use pellet guns in an attempt to lower squirrel populations.

The strategy has given rise to skepticism for some Gibsonville residents.

Bill Blackwell is a 12-year resident of Gibsonville who is skeptical about the town's new plan to allow locals to hunt squirrels.

"I don't think it's a good idea. I don't trust anyone shooting one of those things," Blackwell said.

Residents constantly deal with squirrels eating away plants and trees and destroying property.

Overabundance of squirrels is a phenomenon not only in Gibsonville, but in Elon as well.

When first visiting Elon's campus, many people notice the beautiful brick walkways, majestic buildings and fountains, lush flowers and trees and the large number of squirrels constantly skittering about.

Some squirrels can be seen roaming the pathways and grass, climbing up trees, popping out of garbage cans and chasing each other around during mating season.



Joshua Kapfer, an environmental studies professor at Elon offered insight on why squirrels live in such abundance and comfort on campus.

"The grounds on campus provide squirrels with an unlimited habitat," said Kapfer. "The squirrels have few natural predators here. Although foxes and coyotes can survive in suburbia, they are almost nonexistent here on campus."

Elon's campus also provides squirrels with a nearly unlimited food source in the form of acorns and nuts from trees and, of course, garbage from thousands of students.

Most Elon students who have been here for a few years probably have a story or two about a squirrel encounter on campus.

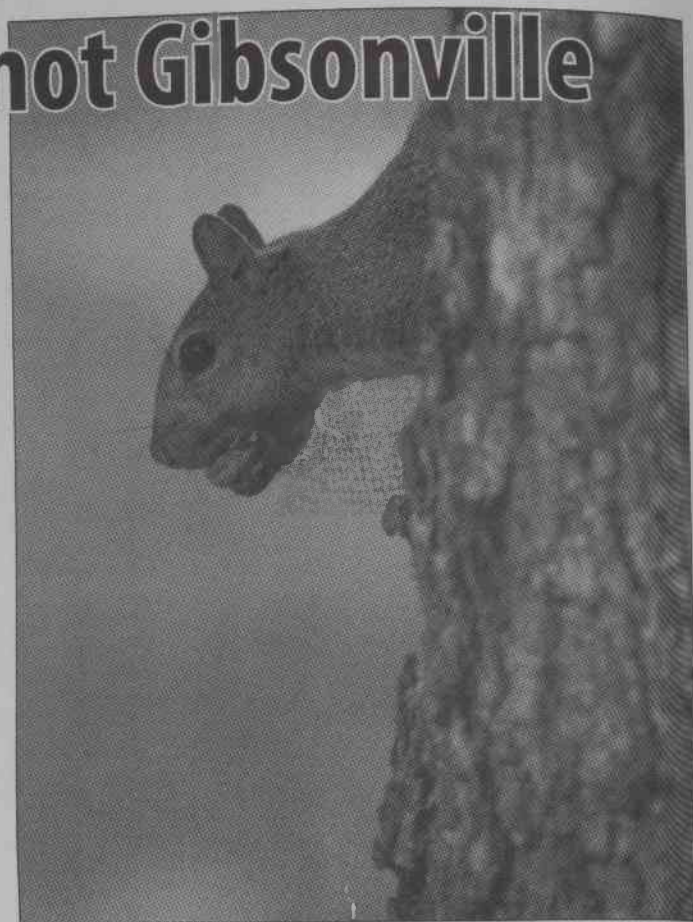
"They're everywhere," junior Kiersten Coatney said. "I'm always afraid I'll hit one with my car when I'm driving. One time one actually brushed against me when I was walking. It was pretty weird."

Love them or hate them, the squirrels in Gibsonville and Elon are here to stay.

"If we wanted to get rid of them, we would have to make campus less attractive to squirrels, or develop a more relaxed attitude towards their natural predators," Kapfer said.

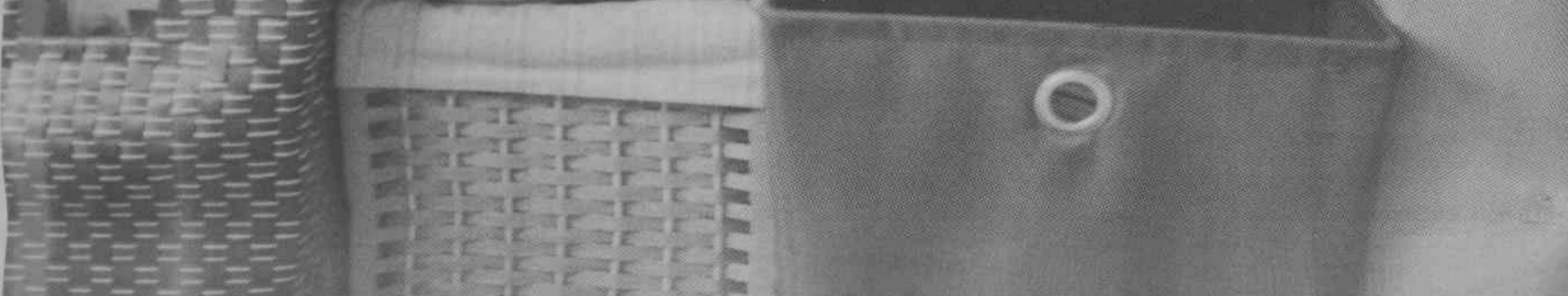
Kapfer said he does not necessarily endorse any certain method to getting populations down.

"They are a nuisance more than anything," Kapfer said



MOLLY CAREY | Staff Photographer  
Squirrels can be seen all over Elon's campus. Squirrels can now be hunted in Gibsonville, but are not permitted to be hunted in the Town of Elon.

## How-To: Decorate your dorm room



### Organize with boxes

The size of a dorm room is certainly not the typical dimensions we look for in a comfortable bedroom. When roommates and all of their belongings are also thrown into the mix, it can be tough to keep the room neat and organized. Rather than letting a mess pile up, use colorful storage containers to organize everything from shoes to textbooks to snacks. The containers, in all shapes and styles, bring color to a drab dorm room and can be stored under the bed.

### Soften up your bed

Without question, a dorm room bed is not as plush as a bed at home. After a long day of class and homework, an uncomfortable bed is the last thing you want to climb into at night. So, soften it up with lots of pillows. Buy a body pillow and dress it up with a cute cover or find a few brightly colored pillows to decorate your bed. Not only will your bed look nice, but you'll have a better night's sleep.

### Don't forget the touches from home

Whether your house is just around the corner or on the other side of the country, it's important to bring a few decorations from home to make your dorm room really comforting. While it's not a good idea to create unnecessary clutter by lugging every knick-knack from your house to your new living space, a few small treasures can decorate a desk or bedside table and serve as a little reminder of home and family. But remember, if it's breakable, it might be better left at home.

Caitlin O'Donnell  
News Editor

Trying to make a small space like a dorm room look cute can be a challenge. No matter how many decorations you packed, turning a drab white room into a colorful place to live can seem impossible. Here are a few tips to make a dorm room feel like a home.

### Share your pictures in a creative way

Just because they're not here on campus doesn't mean friends from home have to be forgotten. Find creative ways to share lots of pictures, rather than just strategically placing a few frames around the room. Buy a large corkboard for the wall and pin favorite photos to it or invest in a large frame that can hold multiple pictures. Pictures not only liven up a room but also carry with them memories that can liven up a bad day.

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