

Squirrels

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uses were as "squirrelly" as others. So, he decided to post rankings of the colleges on his Web site, www.gottshall.com, awarding more cartoon "squirrels" to a school depending on its squirrel population and how that population was treated.

Squirrel behavior can tell a person a lot about the student body, he said.

"If you're on a campus and the squirrels are friendly ... it shows a campus environment where students hang around more," he said.

At schools where students spend less time on campus, he said, squirrels become less adjusted to human contact and are more skittish of people than at schools where they are around students on a regular basis.

Since Gottshall started the list in 1995, the site has grown to include rankings for many schools outside California as well. For information on these schools, he relies on e-mails sent to him by people who have visited these campuses.

While California schools can receive a rating of up to five squirrels, all other schools are ranked on a scale of one to three squirrels, he said, because squirrels tend to be much more scarce in California than in other parts of the country. However, he said he is working to create one uniform ranking.

On the three-squirrel system, a rating of two squirrels like the University's is "pretty good," he said.

"It shows your campus is a squirrel-friendly place," he added.

But in order to attain the prestigious "three squirrel" ranking, Gottshall said those on campuses can't just say there are many squirrels on campus — they must also have a good story relating a squirrel experience.

For example, the account sent by a Williams College student describing her "out of body" squirrel experience. Or a report by a Penn State observer who described squirrels that "jump on unsuspecting students they believe are harboring treats."

Still, University students seem to be in agreement that local squirrels are among the friendliest around. Senior Ashley Spencer said the squirrels on campus are very trusting of people — maybe too trusting for their own good.

"I had a squirrel eat out of my hand on campus once," she said.

While feeding squirrels is a common practice — and one advocated by Gottshall — University grounds manager Tim King said feeding the local wildlife only leads to trouble.

Feeding squirrels may result in overpopulation, he said, which in turn can lead to a lack of food sources for squirrels. When that happens, he said, squirrels may resort to chewing tree bark, which can kill trees. Not only that, he said, but when people leave food out for squirrels, they may also be inadvertently feeding the rats and raccoons that live on campus as well.

And although squirrels may appear cute and friendly, King said, it is important to remember that they are still wild animals.

"There's been a lot of cases of people being bitten," he said. "And they can carry diseases."

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Redistricting

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Democratic voting blocks stronger than Republican ones.

Bob Avery, the chairman of the Lane County Republican party, accused Bradbury of gerrymandering.

"There appears to be a statewide effort to dilute rural votes," he said. "It's hard to imagine what the University of Oregon community has in common with Veneta."

Bradbury said at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting that his redistricting plan was drawn in accordance with state law, which required House seats to represent 57,023 people and Senate seats to represent 114,047 people.

Other state laws require Bradbury to honor existing geographic and political boundaries, keep communities of interest in the same districts, avoid splitting voting groups, consider transportation issues, maintain some sense of continuance and to give no favor to politicians.

To view Bradbury's proposed map, visit: www.sos.state.or.us/redistrict/redistrict.htm.

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