



Siberian chipmunks – *Tamias sibiricus*

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Recognition

- The is a small, diurnal and omnivorous terrestrial squirrel (~100g) living exclusively in forests.
- Its fur is characterised by 5 longitudinal black dorsal stripes.
- It inhabits and reproduces in a burrow where it hibernates from October-November to March-April.



Native range

Their native range is from northern European Russia across Asia as far as China and Hokkaido (Japan).



Western European Range

- This species has been introduced to western Europe, where isolated populations are present in Belgium, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy.
- The introductions are from escaped pets so its likely that the species has been introduced to other European countries too.



Siberian chipmunks in western Europe



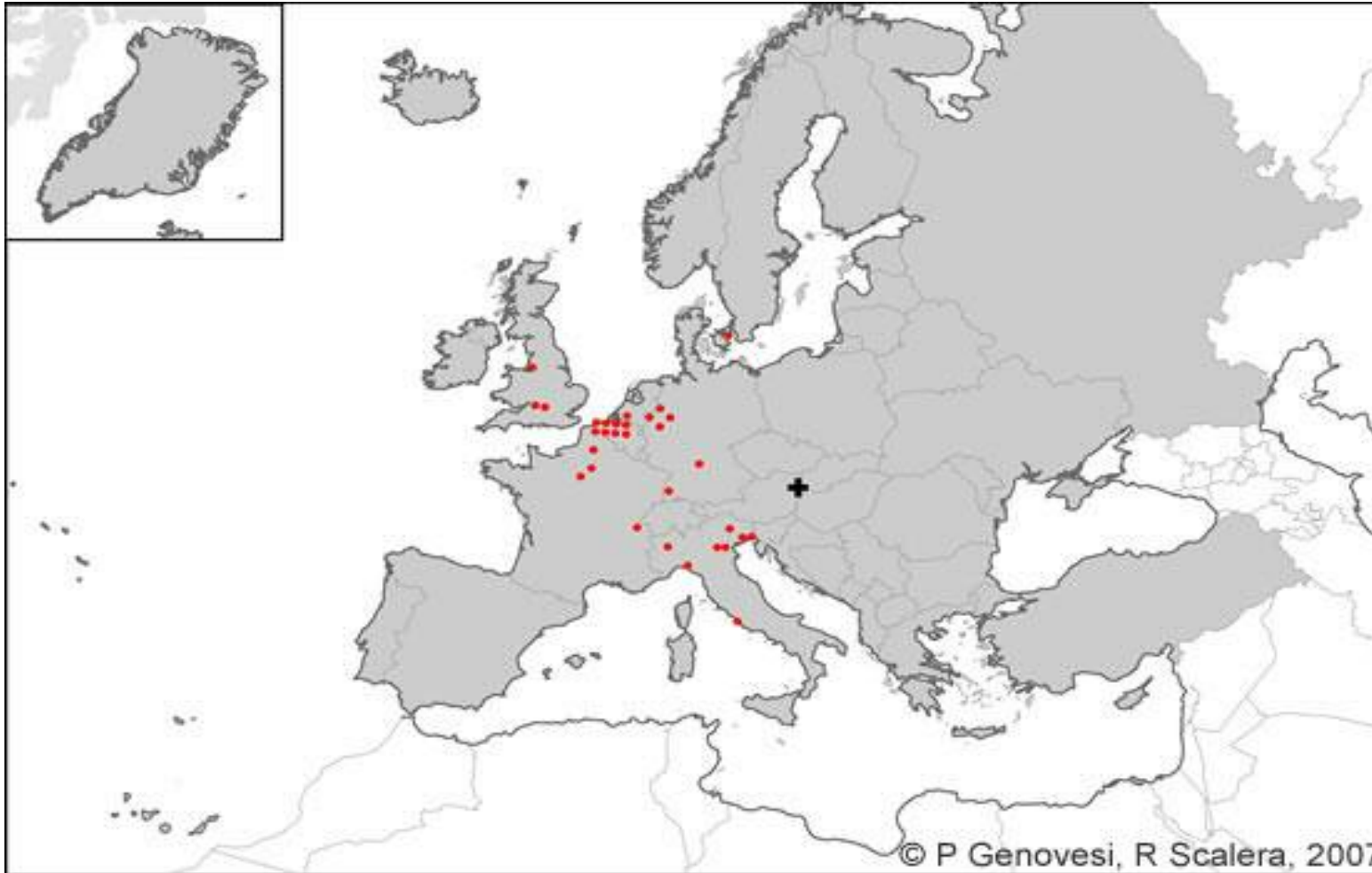
KEY



Known distribution



Extinct



Situation in GB

- Five reports of escapes have been reported in England 2002-2006.
- 2005, 70 animals were released
- 2006, 19 animals
- All were captured or died



Biology

- They are mostly herbivorous but are opportunistic in taking invertebrates and eggs
- They can have more than one litter a year with a mean production of 3.1-8.5 per female
- Domestic cats, weasels and diurnal raptors feed on them



Risks

- At least one feral population in Europe has grown to several thousands but some are in decline
- In their native range, there are reports of significant impact on forest nut production and cereal grains
- They have been recorded as predators of bird eggs/young with negative impacts on ground nesting birds



Risks



- Competition with other rodents
- Carry a range of parasites and diseases associated with Lyme disease, rabies and plague



Prognosis



- Its probable that there will be future releases in the country from pets or collections in small zoos
- Public awareness surrounding surrounding invasive non-native species could help enormously

