



# Vigilance and foraging behaviors of two sciurid species between college campuses and urban environments



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**Research question: Do squirrels on college campuses and urban environments differ in how much time they spend foraging and being vigilant?**

### Background:

- Previous work found urban squirrels displayed more vigilant behavior than rural squirrels
- Vehicular and pedestrian traffic, increased noise levels, and human disturbance were hypothesized to be reasons for these behavior differences

### Prediction:

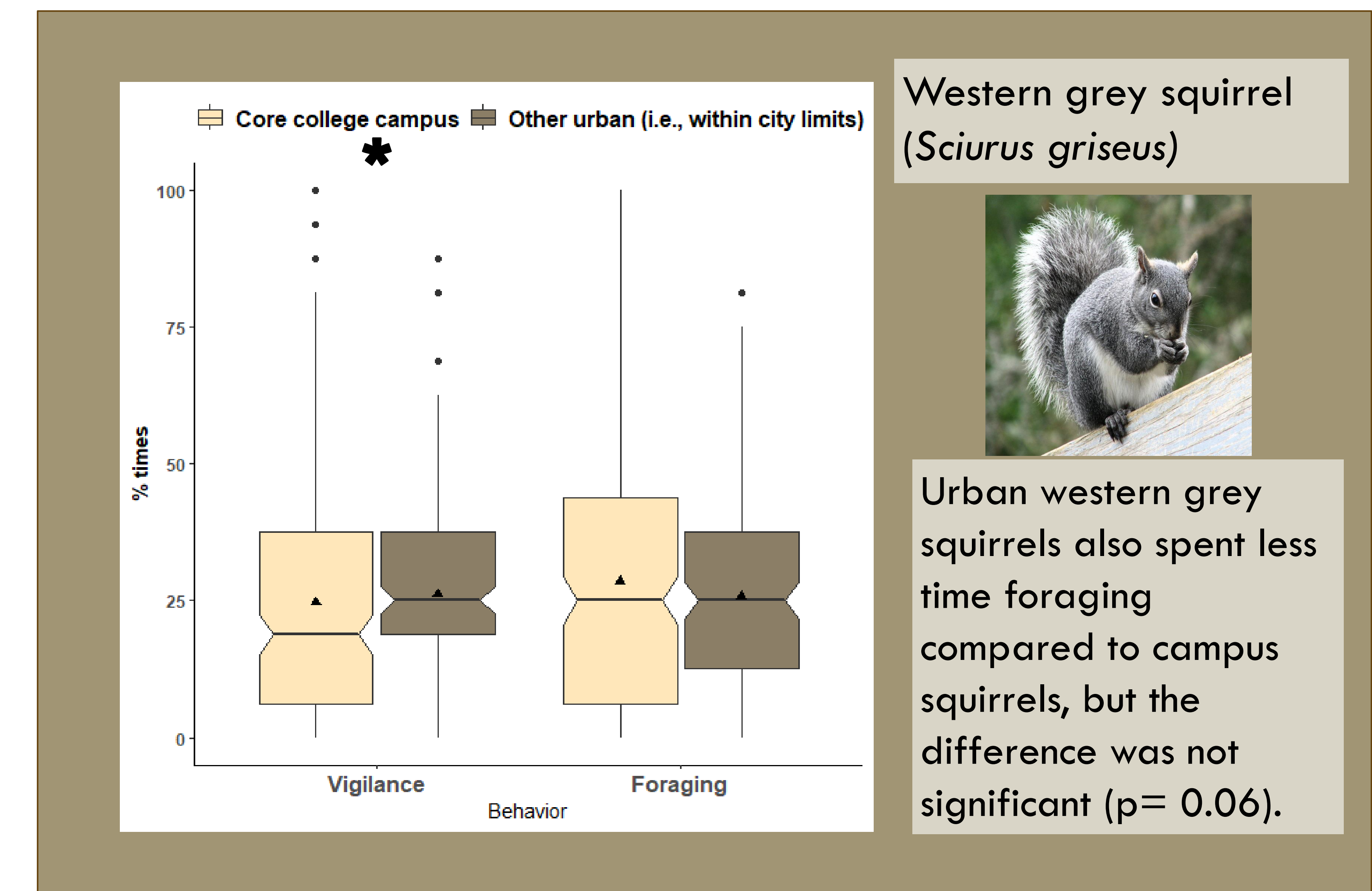
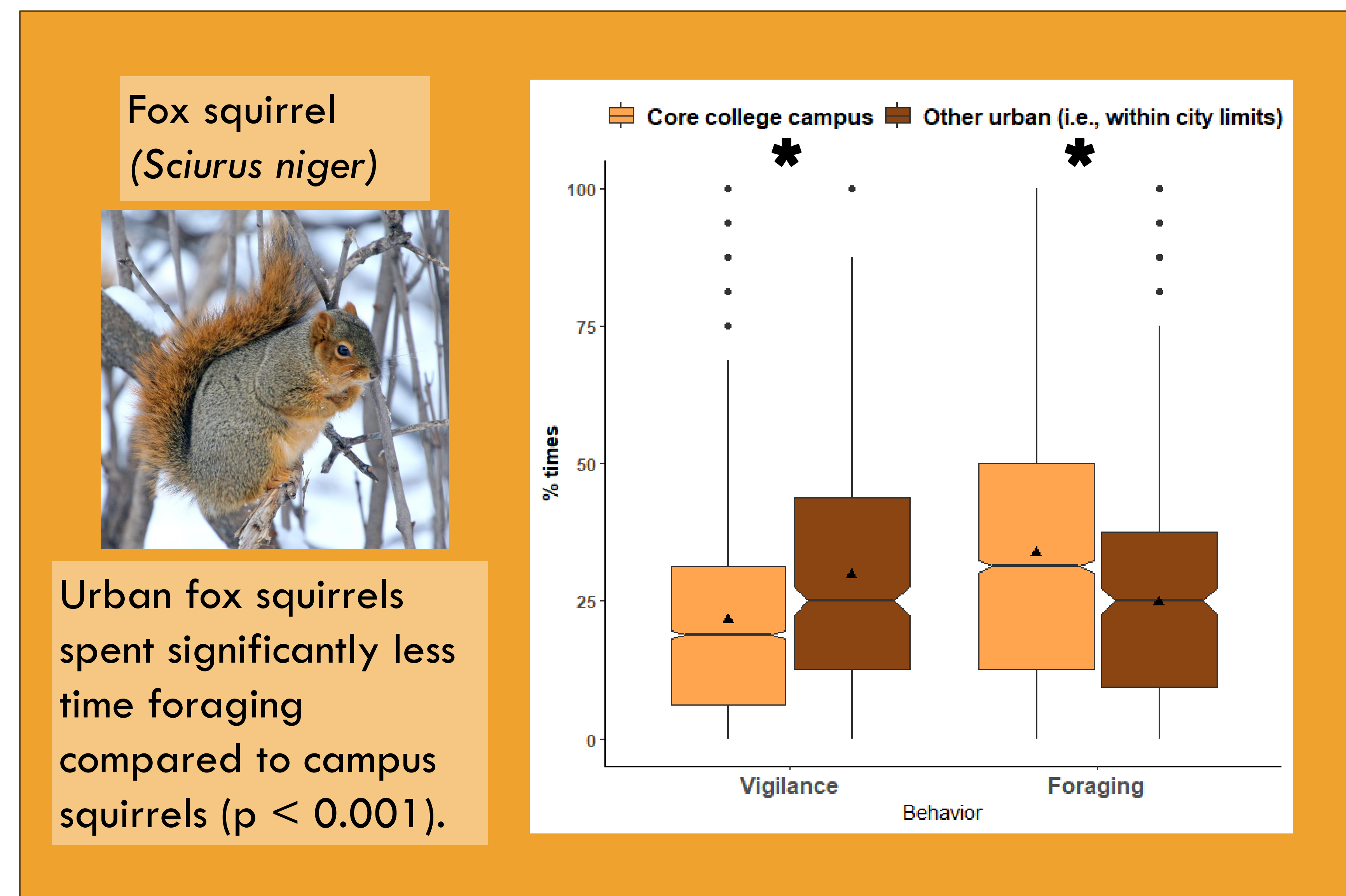
Squirrels observed on college campuses will be less vigilant and forage more than those in urban environments.

### Methods:

Observations of Fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger*) and Western grey squirrels (*Sciurus griseus*) used for study were from the national Squirrel-Net ([squirrel-net.org](http://squirrel-net.org)) behavioral database.

Mann-Whitney tests were performed in R to determine if differences in behavior between college and urban squirrels were significant.

**Results: College campus squirrels, regardless of species, were significantly less vigilant than urban squirrels.**



### Discussion:

- Fox and western grey squirrels on college campuses may be more desensitized to human activity than urban squirrels
- Possible reasons could be fewer predators or less vehicle traffic on campuses compared to urban areas
- College Campuses may have more attractive tree species, like oaks, for squirrels to forage around than urban areas