
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Media English 媒体英语

Red squirrels sniff out danger better than greys

红松鼠比灰松鼠更能嗅出危险



在红松鼠与竞争物种灰松鼠的生存斗争中，天敌松貂似乎成了红松鼠的一个意想不到的盟友。贝尔法斯特女王大学的科学家们发现，虽然松貂捕食红、灰松鼠两个物种，但灰松鼠更容易受到攻击。

Wide-eyed and cute as they appear, **pine martens** are **sharp-clawed predators**. Their **agility** and **tree-climbing** skills make them the enemy of any squirrel. But an **innate** fear of their predators seems, according to this research, to give the reds an **edge** over their grey competitors.

虽然从外表上看，它们眼睛睁得很大，又可爱，但松貂是长有利爪的捕食性动物。敏捷的行动力和高超的爬树技巧使它们成为所有松鼠的敌人。但根据这项研究，对掠食者与生俱来的恐惧似乎让红松鼠在其竞争对手灰松鼠的面前占有优势。

When the researchers applied pine martens' **scent** to squirrel-feeding stations, they found that only the red squirrels responded, showing much more **vigilance** when they **sniffed out** the danger.

在研究人员们给松鼠的喂食器上喷了松貂的气味后，他们发现只有红松鼠作出了反应，它们在嗅出危险时表现得更警觉。

Grey squirrels, on the other hand, seemed to ignore the scent and carry on regardless. This lack of a **behavioural response**, researchers say, means greys are much more **vulnerable**.

另一边，灰松鼠则似乎不顾松貂的气味，继续进食。研究人员说，这种缺乏行为反应的表现意味着灰松鼠更容易受到伤害。

But with more than two million grey squirrels in the UK and just 150,000 native reds, they could do with any advantage that **evolution** has given them.

但英国有 200 多万只灰松鼠，而仅有 15 万只土生土长的红松鼠，红松鼠需要利用进化赋予它们的任何有利条件。

1. 词汇表

wide-eyed	睁大眼睛的
pine martens	松貂
sharp-clawed	爪子锋利的
predators	掠食者，捕食性动物
agility	敏捷度
tree-climbing	爬树的
innate	天生的，与生俱来的
edge	优势
scent	气味
vigilance	警觉，警惕
sniffed out	闻出了，嗅出了
behavioural response	行为反应
vulnerable	脆弱的，易受伤害的
evolution	进化

2. 阅读理解：请在读完上文后，回答下列问题。（答案见下页）

1. What characteristics make pine martens the enemy of any squirrel?
2. What did the researchers do to find out which species is more vigilant to danger?
3. True or false? *Grey squirrels are more likely to be attacked than red squirrels.*
4. How many native red squirrels are there in the UK?

3. 答案

1. What characteristics make pine martens the enemy of any squirrel?

Their agility and tree-climbing skills make them the enemy of any squirrel.

2. What did the researchers do to find out which species is more vigilant to danger?

The researchers applied pine martens' scent to squirrel-feeding stations and observed the responses of the red squirrels and the grey squirrels.

3. True or false? *Grey squirrels are more likely to be attacked than red squirrels.*

True. The research discovered that red squirrels showed more vigilance when they sniffed out danger, while grey squirrels seemed to ignore the danger, leaving them more vulnerable to attack.

4. How many native red squirrels are there in the UK?

There are 150,000 native reds in the UK.