

SQUIRRELS

members of the family Sciuridae, a family that includes small or medium-size rodents.



KYC

KNOW YOUR CAMPUS

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About squirrel

There are over 250 different species of squirrels and three distinct types of squirrels;

- ground,
- tree and
- flying

Squirrel family also includes

- chipmunks,
- marmots (including groundhogs),
- prairie dogs amongst other rodents.



Location

- indigenous to the Americas, Eurasia, and Africa
- inhabit most types of terrestrial biomes across five continents, but they are not found in Antarctica and Australia.
- Indian Palm squirrel is commonly found in the IGNFA campus.

Role in forest and ecology

- Squirrels help in dispersing plant seeds for future trees.
- In urban and forested environments, squirrels are an important food source for other mammals, snakes, and birds of prey.
- Squirrels play important role in maintaining wildlife diversity

Behaviour

- Squirrels mate either once or twice a year and, following a gestation period of three to six weeks, give birth to a number of offspring that varies by species. The young are altricial, being born naked, toothless, and blind.
- In general, the ground-dwelling squirrel species are social, often living in well-developed colonies, while the tree-dwelling species are more solitary.



Food

- primarily herbivores, eat a wide variety of plants, as well as nuts, seeds, conifer cones, fruits, fungi, and green vegetation.
- Some squirrels, however, also consume meat, especially when faced with hunger.
- Some squirrels have been known to eat small birds, young snakes, and smaller rodents, as well as bird eggs and insects.



Facts about Flying Squirrels

- Flying squirrels can glide for more than 150 feet at a time.
- Their front and hind legs are webbed together by skin, and is called a patagium
- They use the webbed area between their limbs as wings to catch the air and glide,
- They use their tail and legs to steer.
- Flying Squirrels are nocturnal.
- They have evolved this behaviour to avoid predators, and their big black eyes help them see in the dark.



Tale behind Tail

They use their tails for balance when climbing or when they are high up in the trees, for shade on hot days, and to keep themselves warm in the winter. Squirrels also use their tails to communicate with each other. If the squirrel feels threatened, it will fluff up its tail, and when it senses danger, it will flick it to warn other squirrels.





Do you know?

- Squirrels have special swivelling ankle joints that can rotate 180°. This allows squirrels to hang by their feet with their feet pointing in the opposite direction of their body.
- Their front teeth constantly grow to counteract how fast they wear down due to their dietary habits.
- In addition to the tail communication, squirrels make vocal noises and chatter their teeth to communicate. Flying squirrels make additional ultrasonic noises, which are too high for humans to hear.

HOPE YOU OBSERVE THESE FEATURES, WHEN YOU MEET OUR LITTLE FRIEND NEXT TIME.

About the KYC initiative

The New Forest - the IFS training campus - an area which houses the FRI and its sister institutions including the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) is also home to a rich biodiversity. These flora and fauna become a part of our neighbourhood while we are at the campus. The campus is also adorned with heritage buildings, museums, nurseries and a beautiful landscape. This initiative is aimed at making us more familiar with our neighbourhood. The KYC (Know your Campus) initiative started by the IFS 2019 batch in this lockdown period shall come out with a campus related topic each day.

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