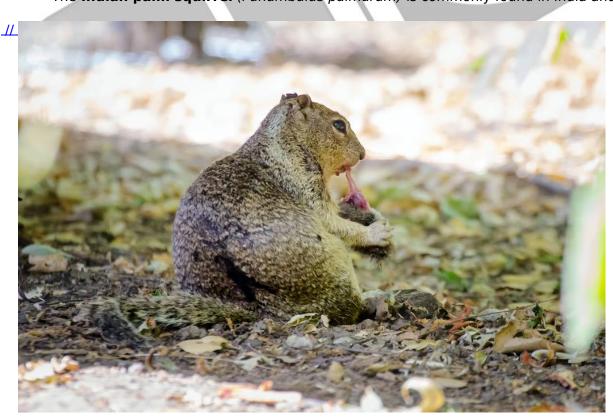


## **Meat- Eating Squirrels**

## **Source: DTE**

A study led by the **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (US)** has discovered that **California ground squirrels** (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*), previously considered **herbivores**, exhibit **opportunistic omnivorous behavior**.

- Researchers observed the squirrels hunting, killing, and eating voles (rodents), with 42% of 74 interactions involving active hunting.
- The squirrels' carnivorous behavior peaked in early July, coinciding with a surge in vole numbers, indicating their hunting was triggered by an abundance of prey.
- It revealed that squirrels' diets are more flexible than previously believed, helping them adapt to changes in food availability and survive in rapidly changing environments.
- California Ground Squirrels:
  - It is also known as the **Beechey ground squirrel** and commonly found in western US.
  - They have mottled fur, with gray, light and dark brown, and white present in their pelage.
  - They are commonly preyed upon by rattlesnakes, eagles, raccoons, foxes, badgers, and weasels and can live up to 6 years in the wild.
  - IUCN Red List: Least Concern
  - CITES: No special status
- The **Indian palm squirrel** (Funambulus palmarum) is commonly found in India and Sri Lanka.



Read More: Malayan Giant Squirrel

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