

## Grizzled Giant Squirrel

**Prelims** - Current events of national Importance | General issues on Bio-diversity.

**Mains (GS III)** - Conservation.

### Why in News?

*The Villupuram Forest Division, Tamil Nadu has planned to conduct a population study of the grizzled giant squirrel to provide a fillip to the long-pending demand for notifying the hills as a wildlife sanctuary.*

- It is a large tree squirrel, arboreal, crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and spend most of their time foraging in the canopy.
- **Scientific name** - *Ratufa macroura*.
- **Habitat** - Canopy of tropical and subtropical forests in South Asia.
- **Distribution** - Found in Central and Uva provinces of Sri Lanka, and in patches of riparian forest along the Kaveri River and in the hill forests of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala states of southern India.
- **Appearance** - Grizzled giant squirrels are the smallest of the giant squirrels.



- It has a distinctive grizzled, grayish-brown fur on its back, with a creamy-white belly. Its fur is soft and dense, and its long bushy tail is usually darker than the rest of its body.
- **Characteristics** - They are agile climbers and jumpers, able to leap up to 6 metres between trees.
- Their bushy tail is used for balance while jumping and as a parachute while descending. They are also important seed dispersers for many plant species in their habitat.
- While males are generally larger than females, there are no significant physical differences between the sexes.

- **Diet** -Primarily herbivorous, feeding on fruits, nuts, and leaves.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **CITES** - Schedule II.
  - **WPA, 1972** - Schedule I.
  - **IUCN** - Near threatened.
- **Threats** - Habitat loss, Poaching and Pet Trade.

*Tamil Nadu Government established Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in 1988.*

## Reference

[The Hindu | Grizzled Giant Squirrel](#)

