

Woolly Flying Squirrel

Prelims - Current events of national and international importance| General Science.

Mains (GS III) - Conservation.

Why in News?

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (HPFD) has captured the first-ever photographic evidence of the elusive Woolly Flying Squirrel at Miyar Valley in Lahaul and Spiti district.

Miyar Valley is located in the Western Himalayas and is a part of the Lahaul Range, located between Pir Panjal and Zaskar Range.

- **Scientific Name** - Eupetaurus cinereus.
- It is one of the rarest and least known mammals in Asia.
- It is also the largest flying squirrel, the longest squirrel and the heaviest of all gliding mammals.
- **Endemic to** - The north-western Himalayas.
- **Habitat** - Remote and uninhabited region of caves and crevices, found on steep cliffs in dry conifer forests.
- **Distribution** - Northern Pakistan and Northwestern India.
- **Appearance** - Similar to other species of flying squirrels, this animal features flexible membranes on either side of its body that link the front and back legs.
- Its body is adorned with a thick layer of straight, silky fur. The fur on its back is a blue-gray hue, while the underside is a lighter shade of gray.
- The throat and ears are covered in creamy white hairs, and the soles of its feet are lined with dense black fur, leaving only the bare, pinkish-brown toe pads exposed.
- **Behaviour** - This species is nocturnal and arboreal; due to its large size and blunt claws, this terrestrial mammal cannot climb trees.
- It was long believed to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 1994.
- **Diet** - These rodents are herbivores, they generally feed upon mosses, lichens, buds and cones.
- **Conservation Status** - IUCN - Endangered.



References

1. [Business Standard | Woolly Flying Squirrel](#)
2. [News Arena Network | Woolly flying squirrel](#)