

California Ground Squirrels

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About California Ground Squirrels

- **Scientific Name:** *Otospermophilus beecheyi*.
- **Common Name:** Beechey ground squirrel.
- **Habitat:** Predominantly found in the **western United States**, including regions like **Briones Regional Park in California**.
- **Physical Characteristics:**
 - Mottled fur with shades of **grey, light and dark brown, and white**.
 - Typically live up to **6 years in the wild**.
- **Predators:** Commonly preyed upon by **rattlesnakes, eagles, raccoons, foxes, badgers, and weasels**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** **Least Concern**.
 - **CITES:** No special status.

Key Study Findings on Squirrels' Behavior

- **Research Origins:** Led by the **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** and the **University of California, Davis**, as part of the **Long-term Behavioral Ecology of California Ground Squirrels Project**.
- **Observation:**
 - Squirrels previously believed to be herbivores are now identified as **opportunistic omnivores**.
 - They actively **hunt, kill, and eat voles (small rodents)**.
 - Out of **74 observed interactions, 42% involved active hunting** behaviour.

Q1. What is the IUCN Red List?

The IUCN Red List is a comprehensive inventory evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species. It categorizes species into groups like Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable, aiding global efforts to protect biodiversity.

Source: **DOE**

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