

Indian Scops Owl

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

Recently, The Rare Indian scops owl spotted near Karnataka's Daroji sanctuary, the first recorded sighting of the species in this region.



- It is a nocturnal bird, known for its distinct ear-like tufts and exceptional camouflage.
- It is a small-sized owl species that blends effortlessly into its surroundings.
- **Distribution** Found across **India**, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and parts of Pakistan.
- **Habitat** Prefers open woodlands, gardens, urban areas, and groves, often near human habitation.
- Identification Features
 - Size Approximately 20 to 25 cm in length.
 - \circ ${\bf Color}$ Greyish-brown or rufous, with heavy streaks that provide excellent camouflage against tree bark.
 - \circ **Eyes -** Bright orange or yellow, depending on the subspecies.

- **Ear tufts -** Prominent and upright, giving it the classic "scops owl" look.
- The bird was detected by its distinctive call a giveaway to its otherwise hidden presence.



- **Behavior Nocturnal** Active after dusk; roosts in tree hollows or dense foliage during the day.
- **Diet** Insects (beetles, moths, grasshoppers), small lizards, and occasionally small rodents.
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Red List Least Concern.
- Threats Habitat loss and pesticide use.

Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary

- The Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary is located in the Ballari district of Karnataka, India.
- It is the *first Sloth Bear Sanctuary in India and Asia*, declared exclusively for the protection and conservation of the Sloth Bear.
- **Habitat & Ecology** Scrub-forest with dry deciduous vegetation, lots of boulders, hillocks, caves and rocky outcrops—ideal for the sloth bears.
- Sloth bears often emerge in *the late afternoon* from caves to feed on fruits, honey, termites.
- Other fauna Apart from the sloth bears, you can find leopards, hyenas, wild boars, pangolins, star tortoises, monitor lizards.
- Birdlife is also rich and several butterflies have been noted.

Reference

New Indian Express | Indian scops owl

