

Snowy Owl

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

The United Nations Convention has granted international protection to the Snowy Owl, along with 40 other species

- **Scientific Name** - *Bubo scandiacus*, a large, iconic white owl.
- **Distribution** - Native to the Arctic regions of North America, Europe, and Asia.
- **Migration** - During winters to southern Canada, northern United States, and parts of Eurasia.
- **Habitat** - They primarily breed on the open, treeless Arctic tundra, grasslands, and coastal habitats.
- In winter, they migrate south to marshes, beaches, and agricultural fields that mimic the flat landscape of their home.
- **Size** - Length - 52-71 cm; Wingspan - 125-150 cm; Weight - 1.6-3 kg.
- **Appearance** - Large, white owl with black or brown markings.
- Thick feathers for insulation and feathered feet that act like fluffy slippers, making them heavier than Great Horned Owls.
- Known as the "Harry Potter owl" due to its popular association.



- **Colour** - Males are generally whiter than females, grow older and get whiter.
- The females never become completely white, remaining brownish with darker markings.
- **Behaviour** - Unlike most owls, snowy owls are *diurnal*, meaning they are active and hunt during the day, a necessary adaptation for the 24-hour daylight of Arctic summers.
- They are territorial, defending breeding and sometimes wintering grounds, often engaging in combat with other owls over territory.
- **Diet** - Primarily feeds on *lemmings and small rodents*, also hunts birds and small mammals.
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN** - Vulnerable.
 - **CITES** - Appendix II.
- **Threats** - Climate change is affecting Arctic ecosystems, habitat disturbance, and prey decline.

References

1. [News Nation | Snowy Owl](#)
2. [All about Birds | Snowy Owl](#)
3. [National Geographic | Snowy Owl](#)

