

Striped hyena

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

A rare striped hyena was spotted near Ganeshgudi bridge in the Kali Tiger Reserve in Uttara Kannada district.

- It is a **nocturnal animal** first documented recently in the western ghats region.
- **Scientific Name** - *Hyaena hyaena*.
- It is locally known as 'katte kiruba' or 'donkey-eared scavenger'.
- **Family** - Hyaenidae.
- **Habitat** - Striped hyenas inhabit **arid and semi-arid regions**, scrublands, rocky hills, and open woodlands.

The hyena's recent appearance may be due to migration from drier habitats in north Karnataka, such as Dharwad, caused by food scarcity or seasonal dispersal.

- **Distribution** - North and East Africa, the Middle East, parts of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent (the largest surviving population is in India).
- **Average size** - 1-1.2 m (3-4 ft) long, 35-45 kg (77-99 lb).
- **Lifespan** - 10-12 years in the wild; up to 20 years in captivity.
- **Appearance**
 - Distinctive **vertical black stripes** on a **gray or beige coat** — hence the name "striped" hyena.
 - Has a **large, bushy mane** running from head to tail, which can be **erected** to make it look larger when threatened.
 - Features **powerful jaws** adapted to crush bones, though weaker than the spotted hyenas.
 - **Tail** is fluffy and black-tipped, usually held low.
 - The face has **large ears**, helping dissipate heat and detect distant

sounds.



- **Behavior - Solitary** - Typically lives alone or in small family groups.
- **Scavenger** - Feeds primarily on carcasses, bones, and animal remains often left behind by other predators.
- Occasionally hunts small mammals, birds, and fruit (especially dates and melons) and has an excellent sense of smell and hearing.
- It helps cleaning up carrion and maintain ecological health by controlling disease spread.
- Territorial, marking with scent from anal glands.
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN** - Near Threatened.
 - **WPA, 1972** - Schedule III.
- **Threats** -
 - Habitat loss and human encroachment
 - Poisoning and hunting, often due to superstition or retaliation for livestock losses
 - Road kills and conflict with stray dogs
 - Low genetic diversity in isolated populations

Reference

[Times of India | Striped Hyena](#)

