

Greater hoopoe-lark

Amidst the barren landscape of the desolate desert, there is a creature that stands out with its unique features and captivating beauty. The Greater Hoopoe-lark, with its sandy brown plumage and striking crest atop its head, moves gracefully through the shifting sands as if dancing to the tune of the wind.

With its long, slender beak, it effortlessly digs into the ground in search of tasty insects and small reptiles, while its keen eyesight keeps a watchful gaze for any potential predators. As the sun rises higher in the sky, the Greater Hoopoe-lark spreads its wings and takes to the air, soaring high above the sand dunes with effortless grace.

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Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	Greater Hoopoe-lark
2	Scientific name	Alaemon alaudipes
3	Colour	Brownish-grey upperparts, paler underparts with black and white barring on the wings
4	Average length	22-24 cm
5	Average height	12-14 cm
6	Type of bird	Grassland
7	Found in India in states	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab
8	Habitat	Dry and arid grasslands, agricultural fields, and scrubland

9	Status	Least Concern
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Features

The Greater Hoopoe-Lark has a distinctive thick and curved bill, which is used to probe the ground for insects and other small invertebrates. It also has a long, thin tail and strong legs adapted for running on the ground. The wings are rounded and the bird has a compact body shape.

The bird has a sandy brown back and a white belly, with black and white stripes on the head and neck. The male has a black patch on the throat, while the female has a smaller, less distinct patch. The bird's wings have a barred pattern in brown and white.

The Greater Hoopoe-Lark stands at around 16-18 cm (6.3-7.1 in) tall. The bird has a total length of around 19-20 cm (7.5-7.9 in), including its long tail.

Habitat and Food

In terms of habitat, the Greater hoopoe-lark is typically found in arid and semi-arid regions, such as deserts, steppes, and sandy areas. They prefer open landscapes with sparse vegetation and are known to inhabit areas with rocky outcrops or gravelly soils.

As for their eating habits, Greater hoopoe-larks are primarily granivores, meaning that they feed on seeds and grains. Their diet includes a variety of seeds from plants such as grasses, shrubs, and herbs. They are also known to eat insects and other small invertebrates, particularly during the breeding season when protein is needed for egg production and feeding chicks.

Nesting and Nurturing

The Greater hoopoe-lark (*Alaemon alaudipes*) is a ground-nesting bird that typically lays between 2-4 eggs in a clutch. The nest is a shallow scrape in the ground, sometimes with a small rim of plant material surrounding it, and is usually placed in an area with sparse vegetation. The eggs are cream-colored with brown spots and measure approximately 26 x 19 mm in size.

The incubation period for the eggs is around 14 days, and both parents take turns incubating the eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the parents will continue to take turns caring for the chicks, which are born with a covering of down and are able to leave the nest soon after hatching. The chicks are fed a diet of insects and other small invertebrates, which the parents catch and bring back to the nest.

As the chicks grow, they become more independent and will start to leave the nest to forage with their parents. The exact length of time the parents care for the chicks varies, but it is generally around 4-6 weeks before the chicks become fully independent and leave the parents' care.

Threatened Status

According to the IUCN Red List, the Greater Hoopoe-lark is currently listed as a species of Least Concern, which means that it is not considered to be at high risk of extinction. This status is based on a number of factors, including the species' relatively large range and population size, as well as its ability to adapt to a range of different habitats.