

Indian eagle-owl

The Indian eagle-owl is a majestic creature, its powerful wingspan stretching wide as it takes flight into the darkness of the night. With eyes like molten gold, it scans the earth below, searching for prey to satiate its hunger.

Serial Number	Characteristic	Description
1	Common Name	Indian Eagle-Owl
2	Scientific Name	Bubo bengalensis
3	Colour	Brown with prominent ear tufts and yellow eyes
4	Avg. Length	60-70 cm
5	Avg. Height	50-60 cm
6	Type of bird	Bird of prey
7	Found in India	Throughout India except for the higher Himalayan regions
8	Habitat	Forests, grasslands, and rocky areas
9	Status	Least Concern

This regal bird is a symbol of wisdom and grace, revered by the people of India for centuries. Its distinctive hoot can be heard echoing through the forests and fields, a haunting melody that speaks to the soul.

Features

The Indian eagle-owl, also known as the Rock eagle-owl or Bengal eagle-owl, is a large bird of prey found throughout the Indian subcontinent. It is a formidable creature with an imposing physical presence.

The Indian eagle-owl stands at an impressive height of around

50-60 centimeters (20-24 inches) and has a wingspan of up to 152 centimeters (60 inches). It is a robust bird, weighing around 1.5 to 2.5 kilograms (3.3 to 5.5 pounds).

The bird's distinctive facial features are its large, piercing eyes that are surrounded by striking black patches, which give it an intense and powerful look. The eyes are a striking golden yellow and are capable of seeing prey from great distances.



The Indian eagle-owl has an overall earthy brown coloration with white and black speckles. Its feathers are soft and fluffy, with a white throat patch and black streaks on the belly. The wings have bold bars of white and brown with a distinct black band at the tips. Its long, powerful legs are feathered and have sharp talons, which it uses to catch and grip its prey.

The female Indian eagle-owl is larger than the male, and both have similar coloration and markings. Their size and strength make them a force to be reckoned with in the bird of prey world.

Habitat and Food

The Indian eagle-owl is a highly adaptable bird that can be found in a variety of habitats, including forests, grasslands, scrublands, and rocky hillsides. It is primarily a resident bird, meaning it tends to stay in one area year-round, although some individuals may move to lower elevations during the winter months.

The Indian eagle-owl is a carnivorous bird, with a diet that mainly consists of small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. It is an opportunistic hunter, and its diet may vary depending on the availability of prey in its habitat.

One of the Indian eagle-owl's preferred prey is rodents, such as mice, rats, and voles, which it hunts by silently gliding over fields and forest edges. The bird also feeds on small birds, including quails, doves, and sparrows, which it may catch on the wing. Reptiles such as snakes and lizards, and insects such as grasshoppers and beetles, are also part of its diet.



The Indian eagle-owl is a fierce predator and is capable of taking down prey larger than itself. It hunts by swooping down

on its prey from above, using its powerful talons to grasp and kill it. It may also ambush prey from the ground or from a perch, using its excellent vision and hearing to locate its target.

The Indian eagle-owl is known for its ability to adapt to a wide range of habitats and food sources, making it a successful predator and a vital part of many ecosystems. Its presence in an area is often an indicator of a healthy ecosystem, as it preys on animals that may become overpopulated and cause imbalances in the food chain.

Nesting and Nurturing

The Indian eagle-owl is a monogamous bird that typically breeds once a year during the winter months, between December and February. During this time, the birds engage in elaborate courtship rituals, such as calling, preening, and gift-giving, to establish and reinforce pair bonds.

The Indian eagle-owl nests in a variety of locations, including rocky crevices, tree hollows, and abandoned buildings. The nest itself is typically a simple scrape on the ground, lined with debris such as twigs, leaves, and feathers.

The female Indian eagle-owl lays between one to three eggs, with two eggs being the most common. The eggs are generally round or slightly oval-shaped and are a creamy white color, with irregular brown or reddish-brown spots.

The eggs are incubated for around 34 to 36 days by both the male and female, with the male often taking over during the day and the female at night. During this time, the parents take turns keeping the eggs warm and protected, with the non-incubating parent hunting and bringing food back to the nest.

Once the eggs hatch, the parents continue to care for their young. The chicks are covered in white down feathers and have

large eyes that are open from birth. The parents regurgitate food for the chicks, which they eat by picking it up with their beaks.



The chicks grow rapidly and begin to develop feathers at around two weeks of age. They leave the nest at around 35 to 40 days old but remain dependent on their parents for several more weeks. During this time, the parents teach their young to hunt and fend for themselves.

IUCN Status

The Indian eagle-owl (*Bubo bengalensis*) is currently listed as a species of “Least Concern” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. This means that the population of Indian eagle-owls is currently stable and not facing any major threats or significant declines.

However, like many birds, the Indian eagle-owl can be impacted by habitat loss and degradation, as well as human disturbances such as urbanization, deforestation, and agricultural practices. Additionally, illegal hunting and trapping of owls for their feathers, meat, or use in traditional medicines can also be a concern.

Conservation efforts such as protecting and restoring their

habitats, raising awareness about the importance of owls in ecosystems, and enforcing laws against illegal hunting and trade can help ensure the continued survival of Indian eagle-owls and other owl species.

