

Malabar tree toad

The Malabar tree toad (*Pedostibes tuberculosus*) is a unique and fascinating amphibian species found in the Western Ghats of India. It belongs to the family Bufonidae, commonly known as the true toads. This species is an important component of the forest ecosystem and plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

Characteristics	Description
Name	Malabar tree toad
Scientific Name	<i>Pedostibes tuberculosus</i>
Colour	Light brown or grey with darker patches and spots
Habitat	Evergreen forests, near streams and waterfalls
Indian states	Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Goa
IUCN status	Endangered (EN)

Features

The Malabar tree toad is a small-sized toad with a flattened body and broad head. The adult males grow up to 6 cm in length, while the females are slightly larger, up to 7 cm. This species is easily identified by its characteristic brown to greenish-brown coloration with prominent warts on the back. The toad has large, dark-colored eyes, which provide it with excellent vision at night.

Habitat and Food

The Malabar tree toad is a nocturnal species that is found in moist deciduous and evergreen forests, near streams and waterfalls. This toad species is arboreal and spends most of

its time perched on the branches of trees and bushes, waiting for its prey. Its diet mainly consists of insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates.

Where is it found in India?

The Malabar tree toad is endemic to the Western Ghats of India, which is a hotspot for amphibian diversity. It is found in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Importance to Ecosystem

The Malabar tree toad plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of the forest ecosystem. Being a nocturnal predator, it feeds on various small insects, spiders, and other invertebrates, thereby controlling their population. The Malabar tree toad is also an important indicator species, as its presence is a good sign of the health of the forest ecosystem. Moreover, this species helps in nutrient recycling and soil aeration.

IUCN status

The Malabar tree toad is listed as an Endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) due to habitat loss and degradation, overexploitation, and the introduction of invasive species. The loss of the forest habitat due to deforestation, logging, and agricultural activities is one of the major threats to this species. Additionally, the pollution of freshwater sources and the use of pesticides and herbicides have also contributed to its decline.

In conclusion, the Malabar tree toad is a fascinating species that is crucial for maintaining the balance of the forest ecosystem. Efforts need to be made to conserve its habitat and protect it from various threats to ensure its survival for

future generations.