



Rare Caracal Cub Spotted in Jaisalmer Desert

Why in News?

Experts have confirmed a **rare caracal cub in the Jaisalmer desert**, making a significant wildlife discovery for Rajasthan.

- Following a photo-based sighting, authorities have launched population surveys and intensified patrolling in the border areas of Jaisalmer.



Key Points

- **About:** The Caracal is a **medium-sized wildcat** found in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, **including India**.
 - **In India, the population is estimated at around 50 individuals, mostly in Rajasthan and Gujarat.**
 - It plays an **important role in local ecosystems** as a predator and is known for its distinctive physical features and **remarkable hunting abilities**.
- **Habitat:** **Adapted to savannas, semi-deserts, dry woodlands, rocky hills, arid hilly steppes, and dry mountainous regions.**
- **Taxonomy and Relation:** Caracal is more closely related to the [African golden cat](#) and serval

than to true lynxes, despite often being called the “desert lynx”.

- In India, it is called ‘**siya gosh**’, a Persian-derived term meaning ‘**black ear**’.
- Its scientific name is *Caracal caracal*.

▪ **Physical Features:**

- Caracals possess **slender bodies and long legs**, and are the largest among Africa’s small cats.
- Adults weigh between 8-18 kg and may reach up to a meter in length. Males are generally larger than females.
- The **fur is short, dense**, and ranges from tawny-brown to reddish-tan with lighter underparts.
- They have **distinct facial markings**, featuring dark lines and white highlights around the eyes.

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- **Least Concern** (globally) in the [IUCN Red List](#).
- Listed under **Schedule I** of India’s [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#) (maximum protection).

▪ **Threats:**

- Habitat loss, shrinking prey base, and [human-wildlife conflict](#).

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