

DNA profiling of leopards in Odisha

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In news- Wildlife organisation of Odisha's Forest and Environment Department has decided to do DNA profiling of the leopards in the state.

Key updates-

- The Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) profiles of the leopards will be rolled out for the first time in Odisha in collaboration with the Centre for Wildlife Health (CWH) of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar.
- The forest areas where leopards are spotted will be identified as part of the exercise.
- **Samples of their faeces and pug marks will be recorded** and will then be sent to the CWH for DNA profiling.
- The exercise will help ascertain and trace the origin in case of deaths of the leopards, after the skin and other organs from poachers and traders are seized.

About the Indian Leopard-

- It is one of the big cats occurring on the Indian subcontinent, apart from the Asiatic lion, Bengal tiger, snow leopard and clouded leopard.
- IUCN status- **Vulnerable**
- It has strong legs and a long well-formed tail, broad muzzle, short ears and small, yellowish grey eyes, light grey ocular bulbs.
- Its **coat is spotted and rosetted on a pale yellow to yellowish-brown or golden background.**
- The **pattern of the rosettes is unique to each individual.**
- The Indian leopard is **distributed in India, Nepal,**

Bhutan and parts of Pakistan.

- Though Bangladesh has no viable leopard population, there are occasional sightings in the forests of Sylhet, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar.
- It inhabits tropical rainforests, dry deciduous forests, temperate forests and northern coniferous forests but **does not occur in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans.**
- India's **official leopard count increased 63 per cent from 2014-2018.**
- As of 2020, the leopard population within forested habitats in India's tiger range landscapes is estimated at 12,172 to 13,535 individuals.