

Kolar Leaf-nosed Bat

December 30, 2020

In news

A conservation plan is under pipeline to save bat species in Kolar caves

Key updates

- A few years ago the Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat was found in only two caves in the village of Hanumanahalli in the Kolar district of Karnataka.
- But the bat became locally extinct in one of the two caves
- Therefore, the Karnataka Forest Department, along with the Bat Conservation India Trust, is on a war footing to save the remaining bats, which are endemic to the area, from extinction.
- The Bat Conservation Society, which has been entrusted with drawing up a conservation plan, has also been awarded a grant to conduct further research on this species of bats.

About Kolar Leaf-nosed Bat

- The Kolar leaf-nosed bat or leafletted leaf-nosed bat is a species of bat in the family Hipposideridae.
- Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical dry forests and caves.
- It is known from only one cave in Hanumanahalli village in the Kolar district of the state of Karnataka in India
- Its cave is described as an inaccessibly narrow opening in granite rocks
- The habitat surrounding its single remaining cave consists of tropical dry shrubland
- There are five species of bats that live in the caves of Hanumanahalli, of which the Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat is just

one. According to recent estimates, there are just 150 Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bats left in these caves.

- The Kolar leaf-nosed bat is placed in the “bicolor” species group
- The “bicolor” species group is characterized by the absence of secondary leaflets on their nose-leaves and a forearm length of 33–44 m. During the day, it roosts in caves
- IUCN status: Critically endangered

Threat

- Its habitat is under threat due to illegal granite mining.
- Its single cave is not on protected land, and the species itself is not protected by Indian law.
- Granite miners have driven them out of at least two caves by setting fires; the fires make granite extraction easier.

Bats in India & their Significance

- Bats are one of the least studied mammals in the country, though there are 130 species in India.
- They are very adaptable creatures and therefore can often be found near human habitation or even in urban settlements, which makes them vulnerable.
- Bats also have a bad image in the public eye, as carriers of diseases. But the truth is, bats are absolutely vital for the ecology as they are pollinators, their main diet being nectar.
- While insectivorous bats act as best insect cleansers by devouring and keeping them under control, fruit eating bats on the other hand are the best natural seed dispersal agents and cross pollinators and hence play a vital role in regeneration.
- Many species of fruiting trees depend on these bats for dispersal and regeneration.

A brief note on Bat Conservation India Trust

- Bat Conservation India Trust (BCIT) is a non-profit organization which was conceived for the protection of bat species in India by protecting their habitat.
- It aims to preserve and conserve bats and its habitats across India through partnership with communities, scientists, researchers, government and organizations.