

Nilgiri Tahr

April 7, 2020

Why in news?

Sightings of Nilgiri tahr in Mukurthi National Park rose from 568 in 2018 to 612 in 2019.

About the animal:

- It is also known as **Nilgiri Ibex**.
- It is the **state animal of Tamil Nadu**.
- It inhabits the open montane grassland habitats at elevations from 1200 to 2600 m (generally above 2000 m) of the **South Western Ghats**.
- **Eravikulam National Park of Kerala is home to the largest population**.
- The other significant concentration is in the Nilgiri Hills, with smaller populations in the Anamalai Hills, Periyar National Park, Palani Hills and other pockets in the Western Ghats south of Eravikulam.
- The Adult males of NilgiriTahr species develop a light grey area or “saddle” on their backs and are hence called **“Saddlebacks”**.
- **Threats** include habitat loss, poaching, vulnerability to local extinction and climate change.
- IUCN status – **Endangered**
- **Mukurthi National Park was previously known as NilgiriTahr National Park**. It is also home to royal Bengal tiger and Asian elephants. It is **part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** along with Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Silent Valley.