

Project Nilgiri Tahr

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In news— Recently, the state government of **Tamil Nadu** has announced Project Nilgiri Tahr, the first-of-its-kind project that aims to protect **the state animal** and raise awareness about it.

About Nilgiri tahr-

- **Also known as Nilgiri Ibex, the Nilgiri tahr (nilgiritragus hylocrius) inhabits montane grasslands with rocky cliffs at elevations.**
- **It is a sure-footed ungulate that inhabits the open montane grassland habitats at elevations from 1200 to 2600 m of the South Western Ghats.**
- **It is the only mountain ungulate in southern India amongst the 12 species present in India.**
- **The Adult males of NilgiriTahr species develop a light gray area or “saddle” on their backs and are hence called “Saddlebacks”.**
- **Its population is restricted to the fragmented patches of grasslands in the Mukurthi National Park, which was previously known as NilgiriTahr National Park.**
- **It can be seen in Mukurthi, Glenmorgan of the Nilgiris, Anamalai, Grass Hills, Coimbatore’s Siruvani hills, Dindigul’s Palani hills, Megamalai of Theni, Agasthyamalai ranges and Eravikulam in Kerala.**
- **Threats include habitat loss, poaching, vulnerability to local extinction and climate change.**
- **It is protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and classified as an ‘Endangered’ by the IUCN.**