

Species In News

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Manifest Pedagogy

There is some pattern in the way species related questions are asked in prelims. Usually they are in news. And in doing a species one needs to specifically gather information about its habitat, status and threats as per IUCN along with measures taken to conserve them. Keeping this in mind above topic has been chosen.

In news

Threatened species in news

Placing in syllabus

Environmental issues of prelims

Content

Species in news

1. Great Indian Bustard

- **Great Indian bustard**, large bird of the bustard family, one of the heaviest flying birds in the world.
- The great Indian bustard **inhabits** dry grasslands and scrublands on the Indian subcontinent; its largest populations are found in the Indian state of Rajasthan.
- **IUCN status**– Critically endangered
- **Population**-Once common on the dry plains of the Indian subcontinent, as few as 150 individuals were estimated to survive in 2018 (reduced from an estimated 250 individuals in 2011)

- **Threats**-the species is critically endangered by hunting and loss of its habitat, which consists of large expanses of dry grassland and scrub.
- **Special program for it**- In 2012 the Indian government launched **Project Bustard, a national conservation program** to protect the great Indian bustard, along with the Bengal Florican , the Lesser Florican, and their habitats from further declines. The program was modeled after Project Tiger, a massive national effort initiated in the early 1970s to protect the tigers of India and their habitat. It is protected under Wildlife Protection Act 1972 of India

2. Sea Lions

- **Sea lion**, any of six species of earedseals found primarily in Pacific waters. Sea lions are characterized by a coat of short coarse hair that lacks a distinct undercoat. Except for the California sea lion, males have lion-like manes and constantly roar to defend their harems (hence their name)
- **IUCN status**-Endangered
- **Threats**- Introduced species, such as dogs, carry diseases that can spread to sea lions. They are vulnerable to the effects of climate change on ocean currents, which impacts their fish prey abundance. They are also victims of bycatch in fisheries.

3. Gangetic Dolphin

- The Ganges river dolphin was officially discovered in 1801. Ganges river dolphins once lived in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. But the species is extinct from most of its early distribution ranges.
- **Population**– The total population is estimated to be between 2500 and 3000 individuals in its entire distribution range, out of which more than 80% is within

Indian territory.

- **Habitat-** The Ganges river dolphin can only live in freshwater and the Gangetic Dolphin is distributed in the Gangetic-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of India, Nepal and Bangladesh
- **IUCN Status-**Endangered
- **Threats-** The habitat of the Ganges river dolphin is within one of the most densely populated areas of the world. Ganges river dolphins and people both favor areas of the river where fish are plentiful and the water current is slower. This has led to fewer fish for people and more dolphins dying as a result of accidentally being caught in fishing nets, also known as bycatch. The Ganges river dolphin is still hunted for meat and oil, which are both used medicinally. The oil is also used to attract catfish in net fishery.
- Industrial, agricultural, and human pollution is another serious cause of habitat degradation.
- High levels of pollution can directly kill prey species and dolphins, and completely destroy their habitat. As the top predator, river dolphins have been known to have high levels of persistent toxic chemicals in their bodies, which is likely to adversely affect their health.
- Special programme- In Nepal, WWF surveyed the Ganges river dolphin populations in the Karnali River and its tributaries, analyzed the threats to the dolphins and their habitats, and then provided recommendations to policymakers about how to protect them. WWF also monitors dolphin populations and threats in important habitats in India.
- Government of India launched the **Conservation Action plan for the Gangetic Dolphin 2010-2020**