

Wild dog or Dhole

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In news- A recent study has identified 114 priority talukas / tehsils where habitats can be consolidated to enhance population connectivity for the dhole or Asiatic Wild Dog (*Cuon alpinus*).

About Wild dog-

- The dhole or Asiatic Wild Dog is found in three clusters across India namely the **Western and Eastern Ghats, central Indian landscape and North East India.**
- The Western and Eastern Ghats is a stronghold region for dholes, according to the scientists who carried out the study.
- The dhole is a canid native to Central, South, East, and Southeast Asia.
- It is also called by names- Indian wild dog, whistling dog, red dog, and mountain wolf.
- It is a highly social animal, living in large clans without rigid dominance hierarchies and containing multiple breeding females.
- IUCN status- **Endangered**
- Factors contributing to this decline include habitat loss, loss of prey, competition with other species, persecution due to livestock predation, and disease transfer from domestic dogs.
- It is protected under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- The creation of reserves under Project Tiger provided some protection for dhole populations sympatric with tigers.
- In 2014, the Indian government sanctioned **first dhole conservation breeding centre at the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP) in Visakhapatnam.**