

World Lion day

August 11, 2022

In news- Every year August 10 is celebrated as World Lion Day.

About World Lion Day-

- The history of the day lies in 2013 by Dereck and Beverly Joubert, co-founders of the Big cat initiative, and National Geographic made a partnership to create World Lion Day.
- The day aims to spread awareness of lions and the urgent need to strive toward their conservation
- In the wild, there are two formally recognised lion subspecies.

About Lion-

- The lion is a large cat of the genus Panthera native to Africa and India.
- The lions were once found throughout Africa, Asia and Europe but their numbers have dwindled over the years in these continents.
- These majestic cats that symbolise courage, ferocity, and power are threatened by extensive habitat loss.
- The lion is an apex and keystone predator. It inhabits grasslands, savannas and shrublands.
- It is sexually dimorphic; adult male lions are larger than females and have a prominent mane.
- It is a social species, forming groups called prides. A lion's pride consists of a few adult males, related females, and cubs.
- In the 19th and 20th centuries, several lion type specimens were described and proposed as subspecies, with about a dozen recognised as valid taxa until 2017.
- Between 2008 and 2016, IUCN Red List assessors used only two subspecific names: *P. l. leo* for African lion populations, and *P. l. persica* for the Asiatic lion

population.

- The last remaining population of the Asiatic Lions can be found in Gujarat's Gir National Park.
- The population of Asiatic lions has steadily increased in Gujarat's Gir forest and the larger Saurashtra protected area after experiencing a long period of decline.
- Between 2015 and 2020, their population increased from 523 to 674.
- The much larger African lions are a distant relative of the Asiatic lions of India.
- The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.
- The fur ranges in colour from ruddytawny, heavily speckled with black, to sandy or buff-grey, sometimes with a silvery sheen in certain lights.
- Lions maintain ecological balance and ensure the protection of natural forests and help in the conservation of biodiversity.
- IUCN status: African Lion is currently classified as Vulnerable and Asiatic Lion is currently classified as Endangered.

Lion Conservation Project in India-

- In 2020, the Prime Minister of India announced this project on the lines of Project Tiger and Project Elephant.
- The Wildlife Institute of India, along with the Gujarat Forest Department, had created a Project Lion proposal.
- It was launched for the conservation of the Asiatic Lion, whose last remaining wild population is in Gujarat's Asiatic Lion Landscape (ALL).
- The project sought to create free-ranging lion populations within Gujarat and in other states to

counter this problem.

Sites identified for relocation under the Project Lion-

- **Madhav National Park, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan.**
- **Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan.**
- **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan.**
- **Jessore-Balaram Ambaji WLS and adjoining landscape, Gujarat.**