



Leopard Poaching in Chhattisgarh | Chhattisgarh | 17 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the carcass of the **leopard**, aged around seven years, was found in **Chaitma forest range under Katghora forest division**.

Key Points

- According to the officials, some of the body parts of the leopard were missing which triggered the speculation of poaching.
- The **illegal hunting, capturing, or killing of wildlife**, often for their valuable body parts, such as **tusks, horns, skins, or bones**.
 - According to data available from India's **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** and attached police authorities, over 9,253 poachers were arrested between 2012 and 2018 in the country, but the rate of conviction was just 2%.
- Illegal wildlife trade is driven by high profit margins and, in many cases, the **high prices paid for rare species**.
- Vulnerable wild animals are pushed further to the edge of extinction when nature can't replenish their stocks to keep up with the rate of human consumption.
- **Poaching is particularly prevalent in the States** of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Assam.

Leopards



- **Scientific Name:** Panthera pardus

▪ **About:**

- The leopard is the smallest of the Big Cats (of genus Panthera namely the **Tiger, Lion, Jaguar, Leopard, and Snow Leopard**), and known for its ability to adapt in a variety of habitats.
- A nocturnal animal, the leopard hunts by night.
- It feeds on smaller species of herbivores found in its range, such as the chital, hog deer and wild boar.
- Melanism is a common occurrence in leopards, wherein the entire skin of the animal is black in colour, including its spots.
 - A melanistic leopard is often called **black panther** and mistakenly thought to be a different species.

▪ **Habitat:**

- It occurs in a wide range in sub-Saharan Africa, in small parts of Western and Central Asia, on the Indian subcontinent to Southeast and East Asia.
- The Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) is a leopard widely distributed on the Indian subcontinent.

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