



# IUCN Red List Update 2023

[Source: IUCN](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Red List](#) underwent an update, featuring thousands of new species assessments and reassessments.

- This information was presented at the [28<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties](#), shedding light on the escalating impacts of climate change on a diverse range of species.
- The IUCN Red List now includes 157,190 species, of which 44,016 are threatened with extinction.

## What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Climate Change Threatens Diverse Species:**
  - Species ranging from Atlantic salmon to green turtles face growing threats due to [climate change](#).
  - IUCN Director General, emphasises the urgency of ambitious **climate action to combat species decline**.
  - The IUCN Red List update underscores the interlinked nature of climate and **biodiversity crises**, urging joint efforts for sustainable solutions.
- **Freshwater Fish Assessment:**
  - The first comprehensive assessment of **global freshwater fish species is revealed**.
    - **25% of assessed freshwater fish species are at risk of extinction.**
    - Climate change, pollution, [overfishing](#), and invasive species contribute to the decline.
- **Impact on Atlantic Salmon:**
  - Atlantic salmon (**Salmo salar**) are ray-finned fish that can grow up to a meter long, found in the North Atlantic Ocean basin. They are **anadromous**, meaning they live in both fresh and saltwater.
    - Atlantic salmon population declined by 23% (2006-2020), moving them from Least Concern to Near Threatened.
- **Green Turtles Facing Extinction:**
  - Central South Pacific and East Pacific [green turtle](#) populations are respectively Endangered and Vulnerable.
    - Climate change poses threats throughout their life cycle, impacting hatching success and food sources.
- **Mahogany Trees Facing Endangerment:**
  - The big-leaf mahogany (**Swietenia macrophylla**), a sought-after timber tree, shifts from Vulnerable to Endangered.
    - Unsustainable harvest, **urban encroachment**, and **illegal logging** contribute to a **60% reduction over 180 years**.
- **Conservation Success Stories:**
  - **Scimitar-horned oryx, a desert antelope** moves from **Extinct in the Wild to Endangered**, showcasing successful reintroduction efforts in the Republic of Chad.
  - [Saiga antelope](#) improves from **Critically Endangered to Near Threatened** due to conservation measures.

## International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List

- The IUCN Red List is the foremost global resource for **assessing the risk of extinction among animals, fungi, and plant species**.
- Accessible to all, it serves as a **crucial indicator of global biodiversity health**, it offers comprehensive insights into species' characteristics, threats, and conservation measures, playing a pivotal role in shaping informed conservation decisions and policies.
- The IUCN Red List Categories define the extinction risk of species assessed. Nine categories extend from **NE (Not Evaluated) to EX (Extinct)**. **Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU)** species are considered to be threatened with extinction.
  - It is also a key indicator for the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [Aichi Targets](#).
- The IUCN Red List includes the **IUCN Green Status of Species**, which **assesses the recovery of species' populations** and measures their conservation success.
  - There are eight Green Status Categories: Extinct in the Wild, Critically Depleted, Largely Depleted, Moderately Depleted, Slightly Depleted, Fully Recovered, Non-Depleted and Indeterminate.
- A Green Status assessment examines how conservation actions have affected the current Red List status.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

#### Prelims

**Q. 'Invasive Species Specialist Group' (that develops Global Invasive Species Database) belongs to which one of the following organizations?(2023)**

- (a) The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- (b) The United Nations Environment Programme
- (c) The United Nations World Commission for Environment and Development
- (d) The World Wide Fund for Nature

**Ans: (a)**

**Exp:**

- The **Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)** is a **global network of scientific and policy experts on invasive species**, organized under the auspices of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. Hence, option (a) is correct.
- **It was established in 1994.**
- The ISSG manages the **Global Invasive Species Database (GISD)**, which provides information on invasive alien species worldwide. The ISSG also maintains other online resources such as the **Aliens-L listserv, the Invasive Species Compendium, the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species, and the Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa.**

