



Desert Fox and Mange Disease

Why in News

Recently a few **Desert Foxes were spotted** in the scrub forests of **Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district**, suffering from a loss of fur due to the **Mange Skin Disease**.

- There were 8,331 foxes — both Indian and desert foxes — in the state according to the 2019 wildlife census of Rajasthan.

What is a Desert Fox?

- **Common Name:** White-footed fox [//](#)



- **Scientific Name:** *Vulpes vulpes pusilla*

- **About:**

- Desert fox is the **third sub-species of red fox in India**.
 - Other two subspecies are: the Tibetan Red Fox and the Kashmir Red Fox.
- They can be differentiated from other fox species by their **white tail-tip**. Beady eyes and a small snout give them an endearing, almost adorable look.
- Its range does not overlap with that of other red fox sub-species.

- **Habitation:**

- Desert fox **inhabits the dry and semi-arid regions of western and north-western India**.
- Desert foxes occupy less than half of their potential habitats in India.
- Desert foxes can be found wandering around sand dunes and semi-dried river beds, where they build their dens.
- They are omnivores consuming almost everything from berries and plants to desert rodents, insects, spiders, small birds, and lizards, like the spiny tail.

- **Threat:**

- They are threatened by habitat loss, road-related mortality and negative interactions with free-ranging/domestic dogs.

▪ **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
- **CITES listing:** Appendix II
- India's **Wildlife (Protection) Act:** Schedule II

What is Mange?

- Mange is a **skin disease of animals caused by mite infestations**, characterized by inflammation, itching, thickening of the skin, and hair loss.
- The **most severe form of mange is caused by varieties of the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei***, which also causes human scabies.
- Some form of mange is **known in all domestic animals, although many varieties of mange mites infest only one species.**
- They are transmitted between **animals by direct contact and by objects that have been in contact** with infested animals.
- Most forms of mange are **treatable.**
- When the infected animal scratches and the skin breaks, it lays eggs and multiplies. The affected area becomes scabbed and no hair grows there.

Source: DTE

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