



Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Cabinet** approved the continuation of the [Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats \(IDWH\)](#) for the [15th Finance Commission](#) cycle (2021-26).

What are the Key Facts About the IDWH?

- **About:** It aims to enhance the **protection and management** of wildlife habitats across India.
 - It encompasses various activities like **habitat restoration, community involvement** in conservation, and addressing **human-wildlife conflicts**.
- **Components of the Scheme:**
 - Support to [Protected Areas](#) (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves).
 - Protection of wildlife **outside protected areas**.
 - Recovery programmes for saving [critically endangered species and habitats](#).
- **Subcomponents of IDWH:**
 - [Project Tiger](#): It was launched in India in **1973** with the primary objective to **protect and conserve** tiger populations in their natural habitats to prevent extinction.
 - [Project Elephant](#): It was launched in **1992** to address the decline in the elephant population due to **habitat loss and poaching**.
 - **Development of Wildlife Habitat:** It focuses on creating and enhancing habitats to support wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
 - [Project Dolphin](#) and [Project Lion](#) are under this subcomponent.
- **Conservation of Keystone Species:** The scheme focuses on [keystone species](#) such as **tigers, elephants, cheetahs, and lions**, which are indicators of ecosystem health.
 - It also supports lesser-known species identified under the [Species Recovery Programme](#) within the **Development of Wildlife Habitat component**.
 - **16 terrestrial and 6 aquatic species** have been identified for saving critically endangered species/ecosystems.

IUCN Status	Species
Critically Endangered	Great Indian Bustard, Hangul, Jerdon's Courser, Malabar Civet, Northern River Terrapin
Endangered	Asian Wild Buffalo, Brow-Antlered Deer (Sangai), Gangetic River Dolphin, Nilgiri Tahr, Arabian Sea Humpback Whale, Red Panda
Vulnerable	Asiatic Lion, Dugong, Indian Rhino or Great One-horned Rhinoceros, Nicobar Megapode, Snow Leopard, Swamp Deer, Clouded Leopard,
Near Threatened	Caracal (Globally: Least Concern)
Least Concern	Edible Nest Swiftlet

- **Beneficiary Areas:** The scheme is set to benefit **55 tiger reserves, 33 elephant reserves, and 718 protected areas** along with their zones of influence.

- **Technological Interventions:**
 - **M-STripES Application:** Project Tiger employs the **M-STripES (Monitoring System for Tigers, Intensive Protection and Ecological Status)** mobile application, that helps to capture data relating to tiger sightings, activities etc.
 - **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The **All-India Tiger Estimation** process involves use of **AI for species-level identification.**
 - **Conservation Genetics Applications:** A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been issued for the **translocation of tigers** based on their **genetic composition.**
 - Genetics is also applied to assess tiger populations in low-density areas and to analyse their **food ecology.**
- **Focus on Specific Animals:**
 - **Project Dolphin:** The Project Dolphin is proposed to be supported by **Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)** and **passive acoustic monitoring devices** for the enumeration of dolphins as well as their habitat.
 - **Project Lion:** Project Lion will be reinforced by the vision in **“Lion@2047: A Vision for Amrut Kaal,”** aiming to promote the long-term conservation of lions and their ecosystems.
 - **Project Cheetah:** The **Project Tiger component also supports** the ambitious Project Cheetah in India. The areas for introducing cheetahs will be expanded according to the **Cheetah Action Plan.**
- **Livelihood Generation:** The continuation of the scheme is expected to generate **over 50 lakh man-days of employment** through direct engagement in conservation activities.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The definition of “Critical Wildlife Habitat” is incorporated in the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
2. For the first time in India, Baigas have been given Habitat Rights.
3. Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change officially decides and declares Habitat Rights for Primitive and Vulnerable Tribal Groups in any part of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)