



Project Cheetah

Why in News?

Recently, the [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#) have assessed [Project Cheetah](#) in [Kuno National Park](#), Madhya Pradesh, and claim it has been a successful initiative by the central government.

- This has inspired the government to **accelerate plans to implement a similar project** in the [Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary \(GSWS\)](#).

Key Points

- **Project Cheetah:**
 - It is a **central government initiative aimed at reintroducing cheetahs**, extinct from India, back into the country to contribute to [global cheetah conservation](#).
 - The **first batch** of cheetahs arrived in Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, in **2022 from Namibia**, followed by a **second batch from South Africa in 2023**.
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - The **mortality rate** among the introduced cheetahs has been **lower than the expected 50%** threshold within the first year.
 - **Out of the 20** imported cheetahs, **12 have survived**, indicating a **survival rate of around 60%**, exceeding initial expectations.
 - **17 cubs have been born** to the cheetahs introduced in Kuno, with **12 currently surviving**.
- **Wildlife Institute of India:**
 - It is an autonomous institution under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
 - It was established in **1982**.
 - It is based in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand**.
 - It offers training programs, academic courses, and advisory in wildlife research and management.

Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary

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▪ **Location:**

- **Notified in 1974**, encompassing the districts of **Mandsaur and Neemuch** in western Madhya Pradesh, bordering Rajasthan.
- The [Chambal River](#) bifurcates the sanctuary into two nearly equal parts, with the Gandhi Sagar Dam situated within the sanctuary.

▪ **Ecosystem:**

- Its ecosystem is characterised by its **rocky terrain** and **shallow topsoil**, which supports a [savanna ecosystem](#).
- This comprises **open grasslands** interspersed with **dry deciduous trees** and shrubs. Additionally, the riverine valleys within the sanctuary are evergreen.

▪ **Ideal Habitat for Cheetahs:**

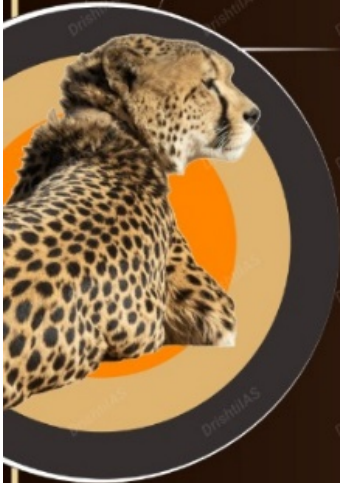
- The sanctuary's resemblance to the **Maasai Mara**, a renowned national reserve in **Kenya** known for its savanna wilderness and abundant wildlife, highlights its suitability for cheetahs.

Cheetah

Common Name - Cheetah

Scientific Name - *Acinonyx jubatus*

- *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (African Cheetah)
- *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Asiatic Cheetah)



Reintroduction of Cheetah to India:

- The "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by MoEF&CC at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (January 2022).
 - Such a plan was first proposed in 2009.
- In September 2022, eight cheetahs landed in India from Namibia.
 - The 8 cheetahs have been relocated to the Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
 - The relocation of cheetahs to India from Namibia is the world's first inter- continental large wild carnivore translocation project.

Slightly brownish and golden skin; thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs

More prominent spots and lines on the face

Found all over the African continent

IUCN Red List Status - Vulnerable



African Cheetah

Slightly smaller than the African ones.

Pale yellowish fawn coloured skin - more fur under body, belly specifically.

Found only in Iran; the country claims there are only 12 of them left. Year 1952 - Asiatic Cheetah officially declared extinct from India.

IUCN Red List Status - Critically Endangered



Asiatic Cheetah



Drishti IAS



