

Project Cheetah | Madhya Pradesh | 15 Nov 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the <u>Wildlife Institute of India (WII)</u> have assessed <u>Project Cheetah</u> in <u>Kuno National Park.</u> 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 <u>Chambal River</u> 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.



