



# Bishnoi, Blackbuck and Chinkara

[Source: DTE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, bollywood actor Salman Khan faced backlash from the Bishnoi community for allegedly hunting [blackbucks](#) (*Antilope cervicapra*) in 1998.

## What are the Key facts about the Bishnoi community?

### ▪ About:

- The Bishnoi, a **primarily Hindu sect** (historically the British classified them as Muslim), mainly reside in [western Rajasthan's Thar Desert](#).
- The **Bishnoi community, founded on 29 principles by Guru Jambheshwarji**, who was born in 1451 CE, protects wildlife, especially blackbucks and chinkaras.
  - Eight of these principles emphasise compassion towards living beings and protecting biodiversity.
  - In addition to their 29 principles, **Guru Jambhoji wrote a set of 120 statements or shabdas**.
- The Bishnoi's eco-conscious beliefs stem from their historical sacrifices for nature, including the **Khejarli massacre in 1730**.
  - In the 1730 Khejarli massacre, 363 Bishnoi along with [Amrita Devi](#) sacrificed their lives protecting Khejri trees from **Maharaja Abhay Singh's (Maharaja of Jodhpur) soldiers**. The community has also defended Thar's wildlife from hunters and poachers.

### ▪ Conservation Efforts:

- [Wildlife](#) is concentrated around Bishnoi villages in Rajasthan's desert region, where the community actively protects flora and fauna.
- The Bishnoi give special protection to **Blackbuck, Chinkara, Great Indian Bustard, and the Khejri tree**.

## What are Blackbucks?

### ▪ About:

- The **Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*)**, or the Indian Antelope, is a species of antelope native to India and Nepal.
- It is widespread in **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha**, and other areas throughout peninsular India.
- It is considered as the epitome of grassland.
- The blackbuck is a diurnal antelope (active mainly during the day).

▪ **Recognition:** It has been declared as the State Animal of Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh.

▪ **Cultural Importance:** It is a symbol of purity for Hinduism as its skin and horns are regarded as sacred objects. For Buddhism, it is a symbol of good luck.

### ▪ Protection Status:

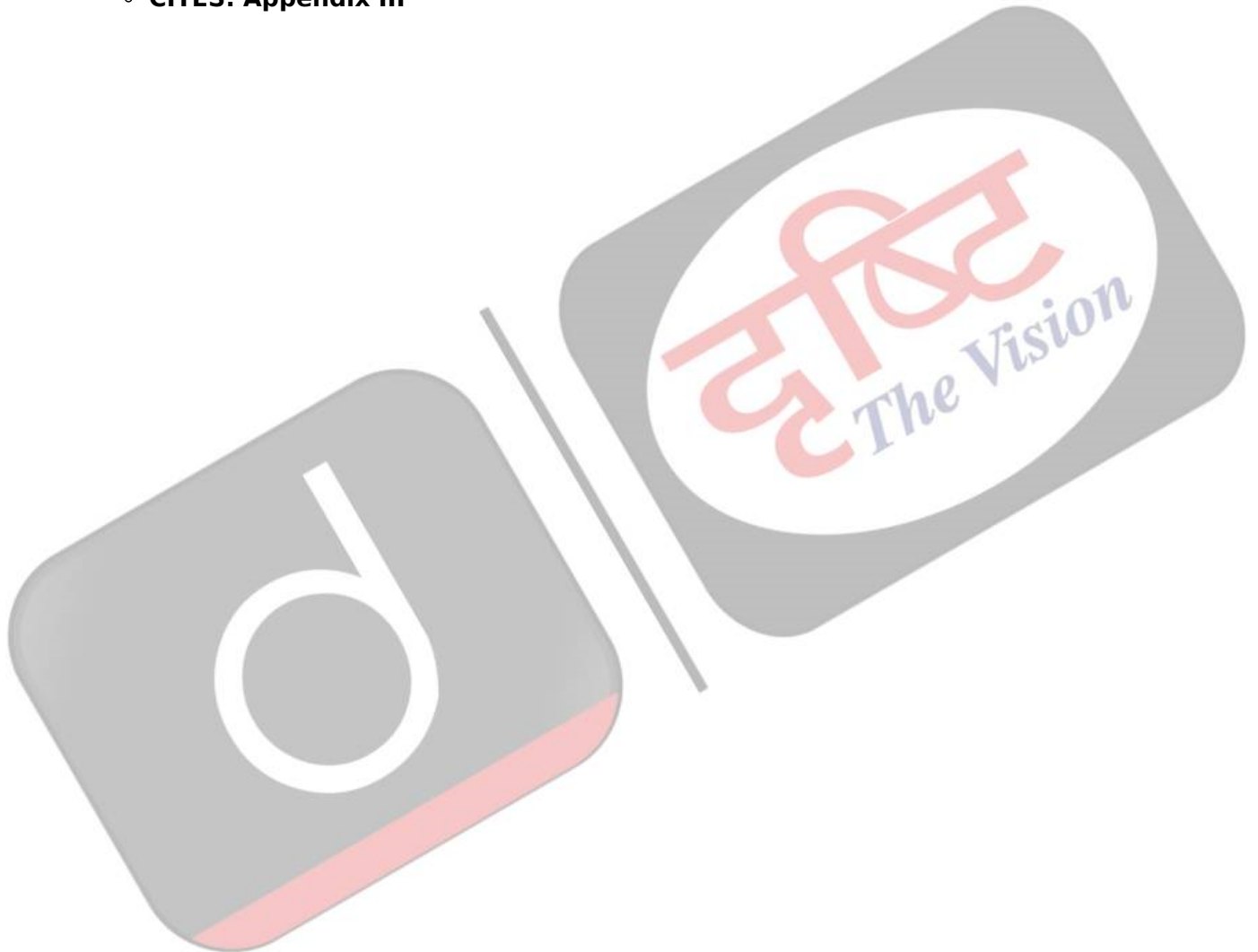
- [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#): Schedule I
- [IUCN Status](#): Least Concern
- [CITES](#): Appendix III

- **Threat:**
  - Habitat Fragmentation, [Deforestation](#), Natural Calamities, Illegal Hunting.
- **Related Protected Areas:**
  - Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary - **Gujarat**
  - Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary - **Tamil Nadu**
  - Tal Chhapar Sanctuary- **Rajasthan**

## What are Chinkaras?

- The Chinkara, or Indian Gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*), is an elegant antelope species native to India, Pakistan, and Iran.
- **Related Protected Areas:** Melghat Tiger Reserve (**Maharashtra**).
- **Protection Status:**
  - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972: Schedule I**
  - **IUCN Status: Least Concern**
  - **CITES: Appendix III**

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# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

## Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife

### 42nd Amendment

**Act, 1976:** Forests & Protection of Wild Animals and Birds (moved from State to Concurrent List)

### Article

**48 A:** State shall endeavor to protect & improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife of country

### Article

**51 A (g):** Fundamental duty to protect & improve natural environment including forests and Wildlife

## Legal Frameworks

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

## Major Conservation Initiatives

### Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):

- ↳ Financial assistance provided to State/UT Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife
- ↳ A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

### National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)

### Guidelines for Eco-tourism in Protected Areas

### Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

**Wildlife Crime Control Bureau:** To combat wildlife-related crimes

### Wildlife Division (MoEFCC):

- ↳ Policy and law for conservation of biodiversity and Protected Area network
- ↳ Technical and financial support to the State/ UTs under IDHW, Central Zoo Authority and Wildlife Institute of India

### Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):

Collection, collation of intelligence & its dissemination, establishment of centralized Wild Life crime databank, coordination etc.

### Wildlife Crime Control:

- ↳ Operation Save Kurma
- ↳ Operation Thunderbird

## Species-Specific Initiatives

- Protection and conservation of Greater Adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract
- Dolphin Conservation in Non-Protected Area Segment of Ganga River
- Conservation Breeding Centre for Wild water buffalo (2020)
- Recovery programme for Snow leopard (2009)
- Recovery programme for Vultures (2006)
- Project Elephant (1992)
- Project Tiger/National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (1973)

## India's Collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts

- ↳ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- ↳ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- ↳ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ↳ World Heritage Convention
- ↳ Ramsar Convention
- ↳ The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)
- ↳ United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- ↳ International Whaling Commission (IWC)
- ↳ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- ↳ Global Tiger Forum (GTF)



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UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Prelims:**

**Q1. Which one of the following protected areas is well-known for the conservation of a subspecies of the Indian swamp deer (Barasingha) that thrives well on hard ground and is exclusively graminivorous? (2020)**

- (a)** Kanha National Park
- (b)** Manas National Park
- (c)** Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
- (d)** Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary

**Ans: (a)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/bishnoi-blackbuck-and-chinkara>

