



# World Lion Day

[Source: DTE](#)

## Why in News?

[World Lion Day](#) is celebrated **every year on 10<sup>th</sup> August** to raise awareness about the conservation of lions and their habitats. It was first established in **2013 by Big Cat Rescue**, the world's largest accredited sanctuary dedicated to lions.

- Recent studies have revealed that **lions were once present in the [Arabian Peninsula](#)**, significantly influencing Arab culture.
- It is noted that **Arabic dialects and literature contain an extensive array of almost 700 distinct names** or expressions referring to the lion.

## What does the Recent Research Suggest?

- **Lions**, often associated with the vast [savannas](#) of East and Southern Africa, and the [Gir forest in Kathiawar, India](#) but they were **once an integral part of the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula**.
  - The evidence of the lion's presence, though now extinct, resounds through historical accounts, archaeological findings, and linguistic nuances.
- Research reveals that lions occupied a vast and diverse range spanning the **Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, Eurasia, and parts of India**.
  - The **lion's habitat extended from latitudes as far south as 15°N (Yemen) to 18°N (Mali, Chad)** and as far north as **45-48°N (Bulgaria, Ukraine, Hungary)**.
  - It is noteworthy that lions thrived in various environments, including **deserts, steppes, and maritime coasts**.
- Lions exhibited remarkable adaptability, dwelling in the arid deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, including Sinai, Sahara, and Yemen.
  - This presence is supported by [Neolithic rock](#) engravings found in Saudi Arabia and Oman.
  - By the early **20th century, evidence of the lion's presence had faded**. Observations in 1920 showed no records of lions in **Afghanistan, Balochistan, or southern Arabia**.

## What are the Major Facts About Lions?

- **Scientific Name:** *Panthera leo*
  - The lion is divided into two subspecies: the **African lion (*Panthera leo leo*)** and the **Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)**.
- **Characteristics:**
  - Lions are known for their **distinctive appearance**, including a tawny coat, a tufted tail, and a prominent mane in males.
  - They are social animals and **live in groups called prides**. A pride typically consists of multiple females, their offspring, and a few adult males.
- **Distribution and Habitat:**
  - Lions are found in **sub-Saharan Africa** and a small population exists in the **Gir Forest National Park** in the Indian state of Gujarat.
- **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:**
  - **African Lion: Vulnerable (Globally)**
  - **Asiatic Lion: Endangered.**
- **CITES:** Appendix I for populations of India, all other populations are included in Appendix II.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule I
- **Conservation Efforts in India:**
  - **Project Lion**
  - **Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)**

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Ans: (a)**

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