



## Madhya Pradesh plans New Home for Cheetahs | Madhya Pradesh | 21 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

[The Cheetah Action Plan](#) for [Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary](#) includes analyzing cheetah genetics, relocating [leopards](#), and boosting prey numbers in preparation for the cheetah reintroduction in 2025.

### Key Points

- **Action Plan for Cheetah Introduction:**
  - **Initial Release:** 6-8 cheetahs **will be introduced** in a 64 sq. km **predator-proof enclosure in the sanctuary's West Range.**
  - **Prey Base:** The area supports adequate prey including **chinkara, nilgai, and other species**, with an estimated 1,560-2,080 prey animals required annually.
  - **Current Prey Availability:** The area currently has 475 animals, being supplemented with 1,500 additional prey like [chital and blackbuck](#).
- **Leopard Challenge and Mitigation:**
  - **Leopard Population:** The West Range has about 70 **leopards, posing a threat to cheetahs, particularly cubs**, due to competition for prey.
  - **Leopard Translocation:** All leopards within the fenced area will be captured and **relocated before the cheetahs are introduced.**
  - **Ongoing Strategy:** This effort is part of a decade-long strategy to **stabilize the cheetah population**, including [Global Positioning System \(GPS\)](#) tracking of 10 leopards for research on carnivore interactions.
- **Cheetah Population and Genetic Strategy:**
  - **Importing Cheetahs:** A population of **12-14 cheetahs** (8-10 males, 4-6 females) **will be imported from African reserves** to create a genetically diverse population.
  - **Genetic Diversity:** Cheetahs will be **selected based on genetic compatibility to avoid inbreeding**, with analysis using **micro-satellite and genomic techniques**.
  - **Individual Monitoring:** Cheetah profiles will be maintained for demographic studies and to monitor survival and health.
- **Ecological Impact and Prey Species Management:**
  - **Ecological Effects:** The introduction of cheetahs will affect prey species' behavior, requiring potential supplementation of blackbuck, chital, and nilgai.
  - **Radio-Collaring Prey:** Some prey animals will be radio-collared to study their adaptation to the new predator presence.
  - **Restoration Plans:** The sanctuary's habitat restoration is part of a broader cheetah conservation plan, with other sites like Rajasthan's [Bhainsrogarh Wildlife Sanctuary](#) and [Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve](#) also identified for cheetah populations.
- **Current Cheetah Status:**
  - [Kuno National Park](#) currently **houses 24 cheetahs** (including 12 cubs), with two cheetahs recently released into the open forest.

### Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary

- **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.

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