



Leopard Died in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, a [leopard](#) died at Madhya Pradesh's [Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve \(BTR\)](#).

- Earlier a **group of elephants had also died** in the BTR **due to toxicity** from over consumption of [fungal-infected kodo millet plants](#).

Key Points

▪ About Leopard:

- The leopard (*Panthera pardus*) is the smallest of the Big Cat family (of **genus Panthera** namely the [Tiger](#), [Lion](#), [Jaguar](#), **Leopard**, and [Snow Leopard](#)), and is known for its ability to adapt in a variety of habitats.
- A **nocturnal animal**, feeds on smaller species of herbivores found in its range, such as the chital, hog deer and wild boar.

▪ Melanism in Leopards:

- Melanism is a common occurrence in leopards, wherein the entire skin of the animal is black in colour, including its spots.
 - A melanistic leopard is often called a [black panther](#) and is mistakenly thought to be a different species.

▪ Geographical Extent:

- Members of the cat family, leopards live in Asia, **sub-Saharan Africa**, Southern Russia, and the Indian subcontinent.
 - The **Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*)** is found extensively across the Indian subcontinent.

▪ Population in India:

- As per the '[Status of Leopards in India, 2022](#)', India's leopard population rose by **8% from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2022**.
 - About **65% of the leopard population** is present outside protected areas in the **Shivalik landscape**. Only about a **third of the leopards are within protected areas**.
- **Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of leopards (3,907)**, followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

▪ Threat:

- Habitat loss
- [Poaching](#)
- [Human-wildlife conflict](#)

▪ Protection Status:

- [IUCN Red List](#): Vulnerable
- [CITES](#): Appendix I
- [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#): Schedule I

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

The International Big Cat Alliance is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition aimed at conserving big cat species and their habitats.

Launched by
India (2023)

Headquarters
India

Member states
96 countries

Structure
Consists of Assembly of Members
Standing Committee & Secretariat



FUNCTIONS

- ⌚ Secure the future of big cats (Tigers, Lions, Leopards, Snow Leopards, Pumas, Jaguars, and Cheetahs)
- ⌚ Mitigate the adverse effects of climate change
- ⌚ Advocate for policy initiatives
- ⌚ Attain the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals

THREATS TO BIG CATS

- ⌚ Poaching
- ⌚ Habitat loss & fragmentation
- ⌚ Human-Leopard conflict
- ⌚ Climate change & Deforestation

Conservation Status of Big Cats

Species	Scientific Name	IUCN Red List	CITES	Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
Tigers	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	Endangered	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Lions	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Leopards	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Snow Leopards	<i>Panthera uncia</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Pumas	<i>Puma concolor</i>	Least Concerned	Appendix II (P. c. Costaricensis and cougar: Appendix-I)	NA
Jaguars	<i>Panthera onca</i>	Near Threatened	Appendix-I	NA
Cheetahs	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I

Other Conservation Efforts in India

- Project Tiger (1973)
- Project Snow Leopard (2009)
- Asiatic Lion Reintroduction Project (2004)
- Project Cheetah (2022)

