



Markhor

Why in News?

Recently, **Markhor**, a [wild goat](#) with **spiral-shaped horns**, was spotted in **Baramulla district of North Kashmir**.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - Markhor is the **largest wild goat** in the world. It is known for its thick fur, flowing beard and corkscrew horns.
- **Legal Protection and Species Status:**
 - Markhor, scientifically known as *Capra falconeri*, is classified as "**Near Threatened**" by the [IUCN](#) and protected under Schedule I of India's [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#).
- **Threats to Survival:**
 - Primary threats include **habitat loss** from fencing, illegal [grazing](#), [poaching](#), and [encroachment](#). [Climate change](#) is also affecting food resources, driving Markhor closer to human settlements.
- **Global Recognition and Initiatives:**
 - Recognizing its ecological importance, the [UN General Assembly](#) designated **24th May as the International Day of the Markhor** to encourage conservation efforts.
- **Significance as a Flagship Species:**
 - Markhor serves as a flagship species for conservation in J&K, helping protect other regional wildlife, such as [Musk Deer](#) and [Brown Bear](#).
- **Distribution and Habitat:**
 - The endangered Markhor inhabits **moist to semi-arid mountain regions** across **Pakistan, India (Jammu & Kashmir), Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan**.
 - In J&K, it's found in areas like **Shopian, the Pir Panjal range, and Kazinag Uri**, but its population is fragmented due to human interference and habitat loss.

