



International Big Cat Alliance

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India has officially joined the [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#), which was **launched by the Prime Minister in 2023**. IBCA aims to protect big cats and their habitats.

Note:

- Though India launched **the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** as a global institution, it must still sign and ratify its Framework Agreement, similar to its approach with other international agreements and institutions, such as the [Paris Agreement](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#), and the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#).

What is the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)?

- **About:**
 - The **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition of **96 big cat range countries**, and non-range countries aimed at conserving 7 big cats and their habitats.
 - The idea was **first proposed** by India's [Prime Minister](#) in **2019** and officially launched in April 2023 to mark the 50th anniversary of [Project Tiger](#).
- **Objectives:**
 - To **prevent the illegal wildlife trade** involving the seven big cat species.
 - To **promote the conservation of natural habitats** for these seven big cats.
 - To **mobilise financial and technical resources** to support the implementation of conservation and protection efforts.
 - IBCA would work towards **mitigating the adverse effects of climate change**.
 - It will advocate for policy initiatives that **align biodiversity conservation efforts** with local needs and contribute towards the attainment of [United Nations](#)-mandated [Sustainable Development Goals](#) within member countries.
- **Focus Species:**
 - The initiative focuses on the conservation of **seven** big cat species: the [Tigers](#), [Lions](#), [Leopards](#), [Snow Leopards](#), [Cheetah](#), [Jaguar](#) and [Puma](#).
 - Five of these—**tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, and cheetah**—are found in **India**, excluding the puma and jaguar.
- **Member Countries:**
 - Currently, 4 countries (**India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, and Somalia**) are its members.
- **Budgetary Allocation:**
 - The Union Cabinet allocated a one-time budgetary support of **Rs 150 crore** for the IBCA for five years from **2023-24 to 2027-28**.
- **Governance Structure:**
 - It includes an **Assembly of Members, a Standing Committee**, and a **Secretariat** based

in India.

- The framework is modelled after the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#), with a Director-General (DG) appointed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

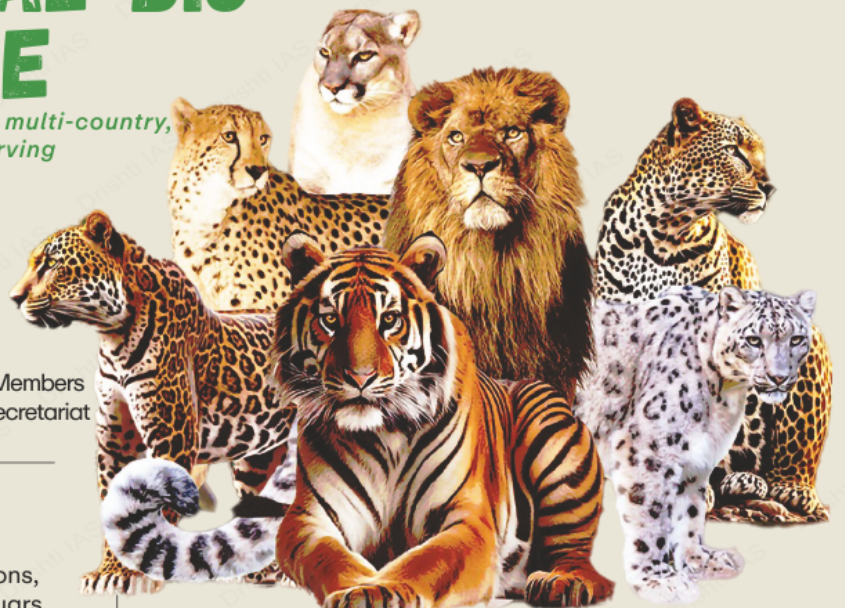
The International Big Cat Alliance is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition aimed at conserving big cat species and their habitats.

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

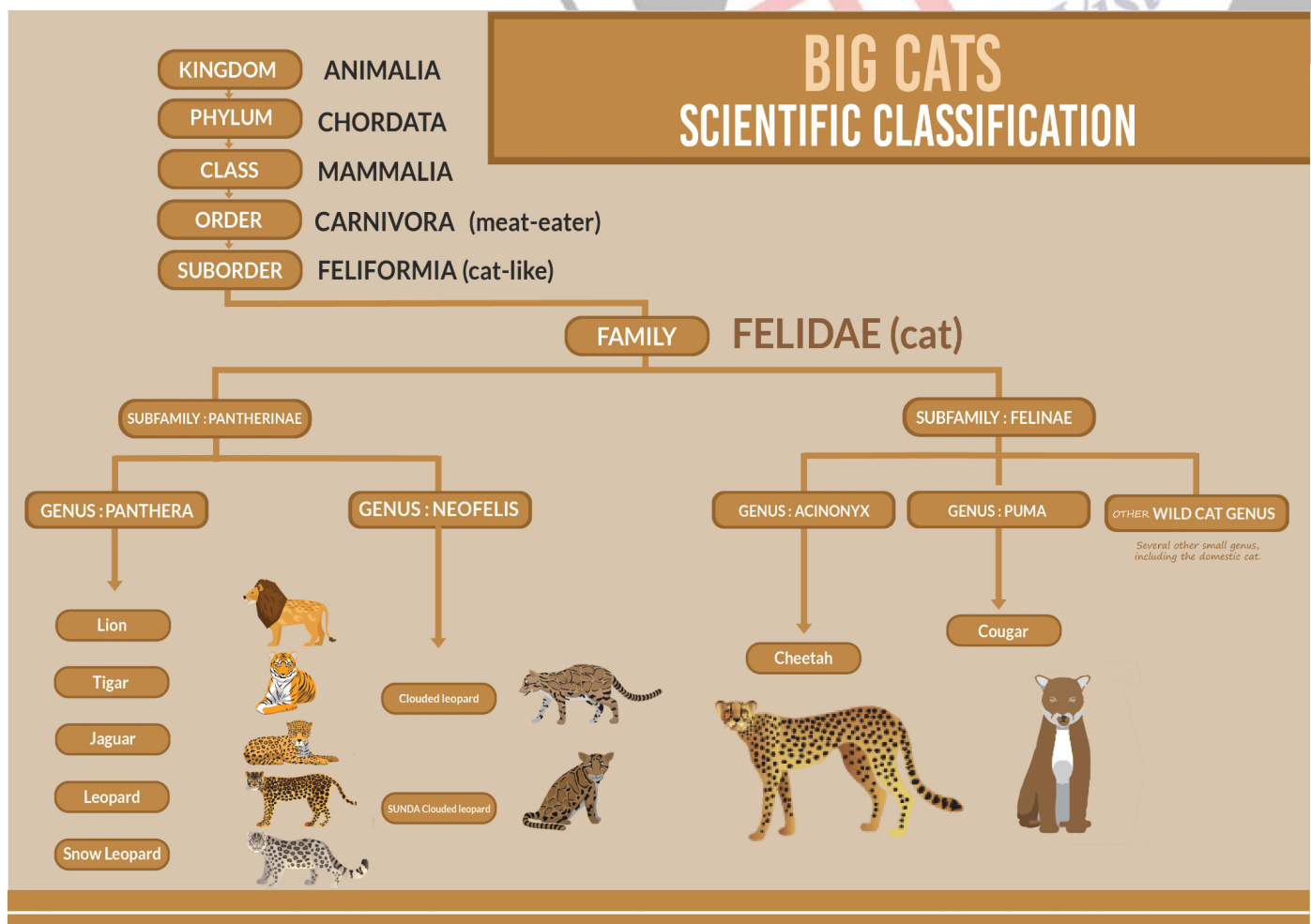
- Project Tiger (1973)
- Asiatic Lion Reintroduction Project (2004)
- Project Snow Leopard (2009)
- Project Cheetah (2022)

What are Big Cats?

- Big cats refer to **large wild cat species**, typically belonging to the ***Panthera*** genus, though some other species are also included.
 - Smaller and medium cats, including domestic cats, are classified under the genus ***Felis***.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Lions** are the only big cats that live in **social groups**, called prides, and hunt cooperatively. Other big cats are solitary, except for mothers with cubs.
 - The **Siberian tiger**, the **largest of the big cats**, is endangered due to threats like trophy hunting and use in traditional Chinese medicine.
 - Big cats are **keystone species** and **critical indicators of ecosystem health** but are increasingly threatened by poaching, illegal wildlife trade, and habitat loss.
 - The Indian subcontinent has historically been home to the **Bengal tiger**, **Asiatic lion**, **Indian leopard**, **Indian/Asiatic cheetah**, and **Snow leopard**.
 - The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952. In 2022, the Government launched an ambitious initiative to reintroduce **African cheetahs** into **Kuno National Park** in Madhya Pradesh.

Conservation Efforts for Big Cats in India

- [Project Lion](#)
- [Project Leopard](#)
- [Project Cheetah](#)
- [Cheetah Reintroduction Project](#)
- [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#)
- [Snow Leopard Conservation](#)



Read More: [Cheetah Cubs in Kuno National Park](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following: (2012)

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

Which of the above are naturally found in India?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (b)

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