

UPSC PRELIMS

FACT FILES

Environment

IUCN Red List
of Threatened Species
for Civil Services Examination





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IAS 2021-22

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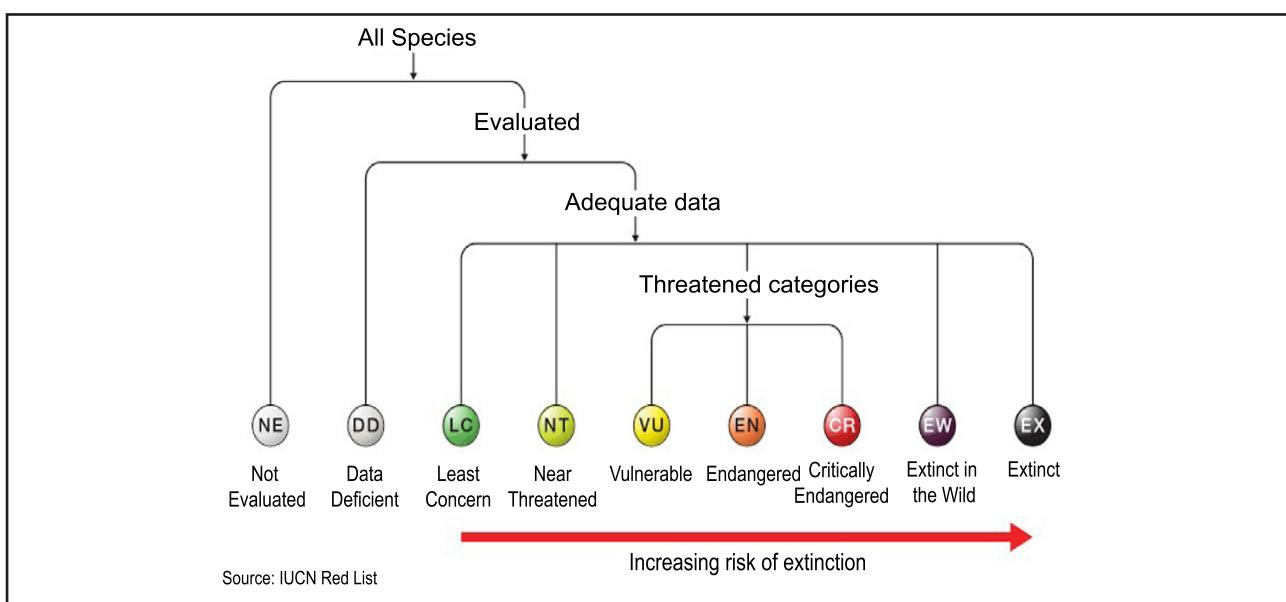
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IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

IUCN Red List

Following are the 9 categories in the IUCN red list:

- **Extinct (EX)** – No known individuals remaining.
- **Extinct in the wild (EW)** – Known only to survive in captivity, or as a naturalized population outside its historic range.
- **Critically endangered (CR)** – Extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
 - ▶ Reduction in population size (>90% over the last 10 years),
 - ▶ Population size (number less than 50 mature individuals)



- ▶ Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in wild in atleast 50% in their 10 years)
- ▶ It is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the world.
- **Endangered (EN)** – High risk of extinction in the wild.
 - ▶ Reduction in population size (70% over the last 10 years),
 - ▶ Population size (estimated to number fewer than 250 mature individuals)
 - ▶ Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in wild in atleast 20% in their 20 years
 - ▶ It is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Vulnerable (VU)** – High risk of endangerment in the wild.
 - ▶ Reduction in population size (>50% over the last 10 years),
 - ▶ Population size (estimated to number fewer than 10,000 mature individuals)
 - ▶ Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in wild in atleast 10% within 100 years)
 - ▶ It is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the world.
- **Near threatened (NT)** – Likely to become endangered in the near future.
- **Least concern (LC)** – Lowest risk. It does not qualify for a more at-risk category. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.
- **Data deficient (DD)** – Not enough data to assess its risk of extinction.
- **Not evaluated (NE)** – Has not yet been evaluated against the criteria

Critically Endangered (CR) Species

■ Hump-backed Mahseer (*Torremadeviis*)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **Habitat:** It is found only in the **Cauvery river basin including Pambar, Kabini, and Bhavani rivers.**
- **Key Features:** It is a species of freshwater ray-finned fish and is referred to as **the tiger of the water.** There are about 16 species of mahseer in India.
- **Threats:** The effects of the construction of dams, regulated flows, deforestation, drought, pollution, and sediment transport have a great toll on this river water species.
- **Initiatives:** Shoal, an international organisation working to conserve freshwater species has initiated 'Project Mahseer' in collaboration with other stakeholders to enable conservation action.

■ Malabar Civet (*Viverra Civettina*)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I, Part I**
- **CITES Appendix III (India).**

- **Habitat:** Wooded plains and hill slopes of evergreen rainforests (Western Ghats).
- **Location:** It is endemic to India and was first reported from Travancore, Kerala. It is nocturnal and found exclusively in the Western Ghats.
- **Key facts:**
 - ▶ One of the world's rarest mammal
 - ▶ It is endemic to India
 - ▶ It is nocturnal and elusive in nature
- **Threats:** Deforestation and commercial plantations are major threats.

■ Rameshwaram ornamental tarantula (*Rameshwaram parachute spider*)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **Habitat:** Found in plantations like tamarind, palm, coconut, and casuarina
- **Location:** Endemic to the Ramanathapuram district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. Recently it has been identified outside India in the Mannar District of Northern Sri Lanka.
- **Key Facts:**
 - ▶ This spider has a light and dark brown stripes across its body and legs, characteristic of all spiders in the genus *Poecilotheria*, which give it excellent camouflage on trees.
 - ▶ Once thought to be extinct. It was discovered in 2004 by Andrew Smith from a sacred grove of the Hanumavilasum Temple in Rameshwaram
- **Threats**
 - ▶ Loss of plantations due to developmental activities
 - ▶ Small population size
 - ▶ Persecution
- **Note:** Spiders occur in private plantations only and are not subject to any protection laws.

■ Peacock Tarantula (Gooty Tarantula, *Poecilotheria Tarantula*, Peacock Parachute Spider)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **Habitat:** Found in a degraded dry deciduous forests
- **Location:**
 - ▶ This species is endemic to India.
 - ▶ Its known habitat is in Eastern Ghats, in degraded forests near Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh.
 - ▶ Now researchers have sighted it for the first time beyond Eastern Ghats in the Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss and degradation for logging and firewood harvesting, collection by international pet traders
- **Key Fact:** It is the only blue species of the *Poecilotheria* genus.

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MAINS

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PRELIMS

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|-----------|-----------------------|
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■ Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsisbengalensis*)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES Appendix I**
- **Habitat:** Grasslands occasionally interspersed with scrublands
- **Location:** Cambodia, India, and Nepal (India: Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh)
- **Threats:** Extensive loss and modification of grasslands through drainage, conversion to agriculture and plantations, overgrazing, inappropriate cutting, burning and ploughing regimes
- **Key Fact:** Rare bustard species that is very well known for its mating dance

■ Great Indian bustard (*Ardeotisnigriceps*)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES Appendix I**
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- **Habitat:** Dry grasslands and scrublands on the Indian subcontinent.
- **Location:** Its largest populations are found in the Indian state of Rajasthan.
- **Key Fact:** The Great Indian Bustard is one of the heaviest flying birds in the world.
- **Threats:** Hunting, and collision with power-lines during their migration to neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan and Nepal.

■ Gharial (Gavial or fish-eating crocodile)

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- **Habitat:** It is native to the Indian subcontinent.
- **Location:** Small released populations are present and increasing in the rivers of the National Chambal Sanctuary, Katarniaghata Wildlife Sanctuary, Son River Sanctuary and the rainforest biome of Mahanadi in Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary, Odisha. Rapti-Narayani River (Nepal).
- **Threats:** Hunting for skins, trophies and indigenous medicine, and their eggs collected for consumption. Decrease of riverine habitat as dams, barrages, irrigation canals, and artificial embankments were built; siltation and sand-mining changed river courses.

■ Sumatran Rhino (*Dicerorhinussumatrensis*)

- Sumatran rhino is the **smallest of all** rhino species.
- Black Rhino, White Rhino, Greater One-Horned Rhino, Javan Rhino, and Sumatran Rhino are the five different species of Rhino.
- The three species of Rhino in Asia — Greater one-horned, Javan, and Sumatran.
- **Javan and Sumatran Rhino are critically endangered** and **the Greater one-horned (or Indian) rhino is vulnerable** in the IUCN Red List.
- They are spread across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. These countries are also known as **Asian Rhino Range Countries**.
- **Only the Great one-horned rhino is found in India.**

Endangered Species

■ Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*)

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **CITES Appendix I**
- **Schedule I** of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
- **Habitat:** Golden langurs occupy moist evergreen and tropical deciduous forests as well as some riverine areas and savannas in Assam and Bhutan.
- **Distribution:** The geographic range of golden langurs is limited to Assam, India, and neighboring Bhutan where they live year-round.
- **Threats:** The main reason for the low numbers of golden langurs is because of their localized habitat and the rapid loss of this habitat due to deforestation.

■ Dhole/ Asiatic wild dog or Indian wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*)

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II**
- **Distribution:** They occur in most of India south of the Ganges, particularly in the Central Indian Highlands and the Western and Eastern Ghats of the southern states. In north-east India, they inhabit Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, and West Bengal.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss, depletion of its prey base, competition from other predators, persecution, and possibly diseases from domestic and feral dogs.

■ Lion-tailed macaque/ wanderoo (*Macaca silenus*)

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **CITES Appendix I**
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I, Part I**
- **Location:** Endemic to the Western Ghats.
- **Habitat:** Evergreen forests in the Western Ghats range.
- **Threat:** Habitat fragmentation due to the spread of agriculture and tea, coffee, teak and cinchona, construction of water reservoirs and human settlements to support such activities.

■ Nilgiri Tahr

- **IUCN Status-** Endangered
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I**
- **Habitat:** Endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western Ghats in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in Southern India. Currently, the only populations with more than 300 individuals are in Eravikulam National Park and the Grass Hills in Anamalai.
- **Key Facts:** It is the State animal of Tamil Nadu.

■ Pangolins

- **IUCN Status:**
 - ▶ **Indian Pangolin:** Endangered
 - ▶ **Chinese Pangolin:** Critically Endangered
- Both these species are listed under **Schedule I, Part I** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Habitat:**
 - ▶ Indian Pangolin is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas, and the North-East. The species is also found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
 - ▶ Chinese Pangolin is found in the Himalayan foothills in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh, and Southern China.
- **Threats:** Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use and international trade for its meat and scales in East and Southeast Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam.

■ Indus River Dolphin (*Platanista minor*)

- **IUCN Status-** Endangered
- **Habitat:** Indus river dolphins are one of only four river dolphin species and subspecies in the world that spend all of their lives in freshwater.
- **Distribution:** The Indus river dolphin is the second most endangered freshwater river dolphin. At present, there are only around 1,800 of these in the Indus in Pakistan. Their population in the Beas River is between 8-10.
- **Threats:** The construction of numerous dams and barrages that split the population into small groups, degraded their habitat and impeded migration.

■ Malabar tree toad (*Pedostibestuberculosus*), or warty Asian tree toad

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **Habitat:** It is a very rare species of amphibian endemic to the Western Ghats.
- **Threat:** Its population is shrinking mainly due to habitat loss, climate change, and Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis, a deadly fungus that has been decimating entire amphibian populations worldwide.

Vulnerable Species

■ Great Hornbill (*Bucerosbicornis*)

- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable (Earlier "Near Threatened")
- **CITES Appendix I**
- **Habitat:** Found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia
- **Threat:** High hunting pressure coupled with habitat loss and deforestation.
- **Key Facts:**

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- ▶ State bird of Kerala and Arunachal Pradesh
- ▶ Local names homrai (Nepal), banrao, Vezhaambal
- ⦿ **NOTE:** The wreathed hornbill has moved from "Least Concern" to "Vulnerable" by IUCN.

■ Mugger Crocodile (marsh crocodile or broad-snouted crocodile)

- ⦿ **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable since 1982.
- ⦿ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- ⦿ **Habitat:** It is mainly a freshwater species, and found in lakes, rivers, and marshes.
- ⦿ **Location:** It is found throughout the Indian subcontinent.
- ⦿ **Key facts:** Already extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar.

■ Sarus Crane (Grusantigone)

- ⦿ **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
- ⦿ **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule IV**
- ⦿ **Location:** It has three disjunct populations in the Indian sub-continent, Southeast Asia, and northern Australia.
- ⦿ **Habitat:** Sarus Cranes are known to live in association with humans and well-watered plains, marshland, ponds, and **wetlands** (like **Dhanauri wetland in UP**) which are suitable for their forage and nesting.
- ⦿ **Key Facts:** It is the tallest flying bird in the world. It is also India's only resident breeding crane. It is also the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.

■ Olive Ridley Turtle (Pacific Ridley Sea Turtle)

- ⦿ **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
- ⦿ **CITES Appendix I**
- ⦿ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- ⦿ **Location:** Gahirmatha marine sanctuary and Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district are main Olive Ridley Nesting sites in Odisha. Of these sites, Gahirmatha marine sanctuary is largest rookery (mass nesting site) of Olive Ridley turtles.
- ⦿ **Threats:** Human activities such as **unfriendly turtle fishing practices, development, and exploitation of nesting beaches for ports, and tourist centers.**

■ Snow Leopard

- ⦿ **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
- ⦿ **CITES Appendix I**
- ⦿ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- ⦿ **Location:** The snow leopard inhabits the higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape in the five states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ⦿ Conservation efforts launched by India are:
 - ▶ Recently the Government of India has launched the **First National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment**, to mark the occasion of International Snow Leopard Day (23rd October).

- The first National Snow Leopard Survey of the nation has been developed by scientific experts in association with the Snow Leopard States/UTs namely, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Project Snow Leopard (PSL):** It promotes an inclusive and participatory approach to conservation that fully involves local communities.
- **SECURE Himalaya: Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** funded the project on conservation of high altitude biodiversity and reducing the dependency of local communities on the natural ecosystem. This project is now operational in four snow leopard range states, namely, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

Least Concern Species

■ Saltwater Crocodile

- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern
- **Key facts:** It is the largest of all living reptiles.
- **Habitat:** It is found throughout the east coast of India.

■ Golden Jackal

- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern
- **CITES Appendix III (in India).**
- **Wildlife Protection Act (1972): Schedule III**
- **Habitat:** The Golden Jackal is widespread in North and north-east Africa, Arabian Peninsula, Eastern Europe, and the entire Indian Subcontinent.
 - In India, jackal populations achieve high densities in pastoral areas such as Kutch, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Haryana.
- **Threat:** Destruction of mangrove cover in the Bandar Reserve Forest is forcing the golden jackal out of its habitat.

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