



drishti

Estimation Exercise of Indian Gaur in Nilgiris

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Why in News

Recently, the **first population estimation exercise of the Indian Gaur (Bison)** was carried out in the **Nilgiris Forest Division, Tamil Nadu**.

World Wide Fund for Nature India assisted the exercise and highlighted that there are estimated 2,000 Indian gaurs across the division.

Key Points

- It has been revealed that the majority of the **animals in conflict-prone areas** in the division live **dangerously close to human habitations** due to their **habitat loss and fragmentation**, exacerbating the probability of having problematic interactions with humans.
- Due to **easy availability of food and lack of threat from predators**, gaurs **prefer to inhabit tea estates and human settlements**.
- The **spread of invasive species of plants** in reserve forest have further **degraded the Gaur's natural habitat**.
- The **changing land-use patterns** like converting tea estates into resorts and buildings has led to **erection of more fences limiting the traditional pathways used by the gaurs** to move between habitats.
- In areas except for Nilgiri Forest Division, there are **sizable populations of gaurs** but **interactions with humans were comparatively less** due to native forests being largely free of invasive flora and land-use patterns also remaining relatively stable.

Indian Gaur



- The Indian Gaur or Bison (*Bos gaurus*) is the **largest and the tallest** in the family of **wild cattle** and is a **grazing** animal.
- **Threats:**
 - **Food Scarcity:**
 - The destruction in the grasslands has led to the decline in availability of food for these animals.
 - Due to the planting of commercially important trees, the lush grassland has diminished which is the prime source of fodder for this wild cattle.
 - They have to fight for their food due to indiscriminate grazing of domestic animals in the areas.
 - **Poaching:**

The illegal hunting of the Indian bison is done for their commercial value as well as due to the high demand of gaur meat in the illegal market of India-Nepal border.
- Nowadays, this animal is kept well and protected in some of the famous **national parks of India** like Nagarhole, **Bandipur**, Kabini and Masinagudi (**Mudumalai**).

World Wide Fund for Nature India

- It was established as a charitable trust on **27th November, 1969** and today it is one of the leading conservation organizations in the country.
- In **1987**, it changed its name from the **World Wildlife Fund to World Wide Fund for Nature India**.

- It is a **science-based organization** which addresses issues such as the conservation of species and its habitats, climate change, water and environmental education, among many others.
- **Mission Statement:** To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:
 - Conserving the world's biological diversity.
 - Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable.
 - Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Source: TH