



Dhole Conservation

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Why in News

Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh rank high in the conservation of the **endangered Dhole** in India, according to a new study.

This study was conducted by scientists from the **Wildlife Conservation Society-India, the University of Florida, the Wildlife Conservation Trust, and the National Centre for Biological Sciences.**



Key Points

- In this study, the scientists explored the conservation tenets of **retention, recovery and restoration of dholes in India.**
- **Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh** were found to be **adequately equipped for consolidating forest habitats and recovering populations of Dhole** by **increasing prey density and reducing the pressure on forests.**
- **Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Goa** are suggested to **increase financial investments** in the forest and wildlife sectors, and **reduce the ease of granting forest clearances** for infrastructure projects.
- **Improving habitat conditions and prey densities** in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha would strengthen the link between dhole populations in the Western Ghats and central India.

Dhole

- **About:** Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*) is a **wild carnivorous** animal belonging to the **canine** family, found in **Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia**.
They are also known as **Asian wild dogs**.
- **Ecological role:** Dholes play an important role as apex predators in forest ecosystems.
- **Conservation Status:** It is under the **International Union for Conservation of Nature's 'endangered'** category.
 - The species is protected under **Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972** and under **Appendix 2 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**.
 - In India, **the first conservation breeding centre** for dhole was built at the **Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP)** in 2014.
- **Threats:**
 - **Ongoing habitat loss:** Due to deforestation and fragmentation of forest corridors.
 - **Depletion of prey base:** Ungulates are main prey of dholes whose population is rapidly decreasing due to excessive hunting and habitat loss.
 - **Persecution due to livestock predation and disease transfer** from domestic and feral dogs.

Source: TH