White Giraffe

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Why in News

Poachers have killed two extremely rare white giraffes in northeast Kenya, leaving just one such animal in the world.

Key Points

- The white giraffes were first spotted in 2016.
- The white appearance of the giraffe is **due to leucism,** a genetic condition that causes skin cells to have no pigmentation.
- **Leucism is different from albinism** where no melanin is produced at all.
    - Melanin is a dark biological pigment found in skin, hair, feathers, scales, eyes, and some internal membranes.

Giraffe

- Giraffes are most often found in savanna/woodland habitats and range widely throughout Africa.
- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** had classified giraffes as **vulnerable** in the Red List in December 2016, when it noted that their population had dropped by over 40% since 1985.
- According to IUCN, the **four principal factors that have led to a population decline** among giraffes are **habitat loss, civil unrest, poaching** and **ecological issues.**
- Giraffes are listed under **Appendix II of the CITES.**

Source: IE