



World Lion Day, 2021

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Why in News

Every year, World Lion day is observed on **10th August** to raise awareness about the conservation of lions.

Key Points

- **About:**

- The **initiative to protect the big cats started in 2013** and the first World Lion Day was celebrated that year.
- There has been a **decline in 80% of the population of lions** in the past 100 years.

This is the major reason for the observance of the day to protect these wild cats in their natural habitat.

- This also works on the **safety measures of the lion communities.**

- **Lion:**
 - **Scientific Name:** *Panthera leo*

The lion is divided into two subspecies: the **African lion** (*Panthera leo leo*) and the **Asiatic lion** (*Panthera leo persica*).
 - **Role in the Animal Kingdom:**
 - Lions hold an indispensable place in the ecosystem, they are **an apex predator of their habitat**, responsible for checking the population of grazers, thus helping in **maintaining the ecological balance**.
 - Lions also **contribute to keeping the population of their prey healthy and resilient** as they target the weakest members of the herd. Thus, **indirectly helping in disease control** in the prey population.
 - **Threats:** Poaching, genetic inbreeding arising from a single population inhabiting one place, diseases such as plague, canine distemper or a natural disaster.
 - **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
Asiatic Lion - Endangered.
 - **CITES:** Appendix I for populations of India, all other populations are included in Appendix II.
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule I
 - **Status in India:**
 - India is **home to the majestic Asiatic Lion**, who inhabit the protected territory of **Sasan-Gir National Park (Gujarat)**.
 - According to the **data from 2020**, there are **674 lions in India**, which were **523 in 2015**.
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - **Project Lion:** Six new sites apart from the Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) have been identified under Project Lion that was announced in August 2020, on the lines of Project Tiger and **Project Elephant**.
The programme has been launched **for the conservation of the Asiatic Lion, whose last remaining wild population is in Gujarat's Asiatic Lion Landscape (ALL)**.
 - Earlier, the **"Asiatic Lion Conservation Project"** was launched by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**. It was approved **for three financial years from 2018 to 2021**.
It envisaged **scientific management with the involvement of communities** in coordination with multi-sectoral agencies for disease control and veterinary care for overall conservation of Asiatic lions.
 - The **Lion census is conducted once every five years**.
- The **other biggest cats** found mostly in India, including the **Royal Bengal Tiger**, **Indian leopard**, **Clouded Leopard**, and **Snow leopard**.

Source: HT