



# GPS tagging of Vultures in Panna Tiger Reserve

## Why in News

- On March 8, 2022, Uttam Kumar Sharma, Area Director of Panna Tiger Reserve informed that for the first time in the country a unique initiative has been taken in collecting authentic information about the behavior and habitat of vultures in Panna Tiger Reserve in the state. Here GPS tagging is being done by catching the vultures.

## Key Points

- The work of GPS tagging on vultures in Panna Tiger Reserve was carried out by a team of researchers from Panna Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun during winters in 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- The 25 vultures available in the Panna Tiger Reserve have been tagged with solar powered GPS devices. It includes 3D acceleration sensors. The GPS tag data is being tracked via satellite.
- This is a major achievement of the Vulture Telemetry Project. Vulture tagging is a well-planned initiative to prevent and conserve India's Old World vultures from extinction.
- With this unique initiative, 14 vulture species have been tagged and studied in 24 countries so far. None of this is from India. There are 9 species of vultures in India. The state has got good results in the conservation of vulture species. The number of vultures has increased to 9446 in the year 2021.
- Out of 9 species of vultures available in India, 3 species are endangered. Out of these 7 species are available in Panna Tiger Reserve. These include migratory species such as the Himalayan griffon/vulture, the Eurasian griffon and the sinerus, and migratory species such as the Indian long-billed vulture, the white-backed king vulture, and the Egyptian vulture.
- The number of vultures has decreased drastically in the last few decades. Efforts to conserve vultures started around 10-12 years ago across the country and the telemetry based project is a meaningful step in this direction.
- Through GPS tagging, important information about the movement of vultures, information about the route of migration and habitat etc. is available. This will ensure scientific management of vultures.
- In this system, blood samples have been taken in the health test of vultures along with GPS tagging. This will help to know the health status of the vultures. This information of vultures will prove to be important in making vulture management policies in future.