



Indian Pangolin

Why in News

Recently a radio-tagged Indian pangolin was released into the wild in **Nandankanan Zoological Park (Odisha)** following soft release protocols and provision for post-release monitoring.

- Radio-tagging involves **attaching a transmitter to an animal to monitor its movements**. Several wild animals — tigers, leopards and migratory birds — have been tagged over decades.

Key Points

- **About:** //



- Pangolins are **scaly anteater mammals** and they have **large, protective keratin scales covering their skin**. They are the only known mammals with this feature.
- It uses these scales as armour to defend itself against predators by **rolling into a ball** when threatened.

- **Diet:**

- Insectivore- Pangolins are **nocturnal, and their diet consists of mainly ants and termites**, which they capture using their long tongues.

- **Types:**

- Out of the eight species of pangolin, the **Indian Pangolin** (*Manis crassicaudata*) and the **Chinese Pangolin** (*Manis pentadactyla*) are **found in India**.

- **Difference:**

- Indian Pangolin is a large anteater covered by 11-13 rows of scales on the back.
- A terminal scale is also present on the lower side of the tail of the Indian Pangolin, which is absent in the Chinese Pangolin.

- **Habitat:**

- **Indian Pangolin:**

- It is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East.
- The species is also found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

- **Chinese Pangolin:**

- It is found in the Himalayan foothills in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh and through Southern China.

▪ **Threats to Pangolins in India:**

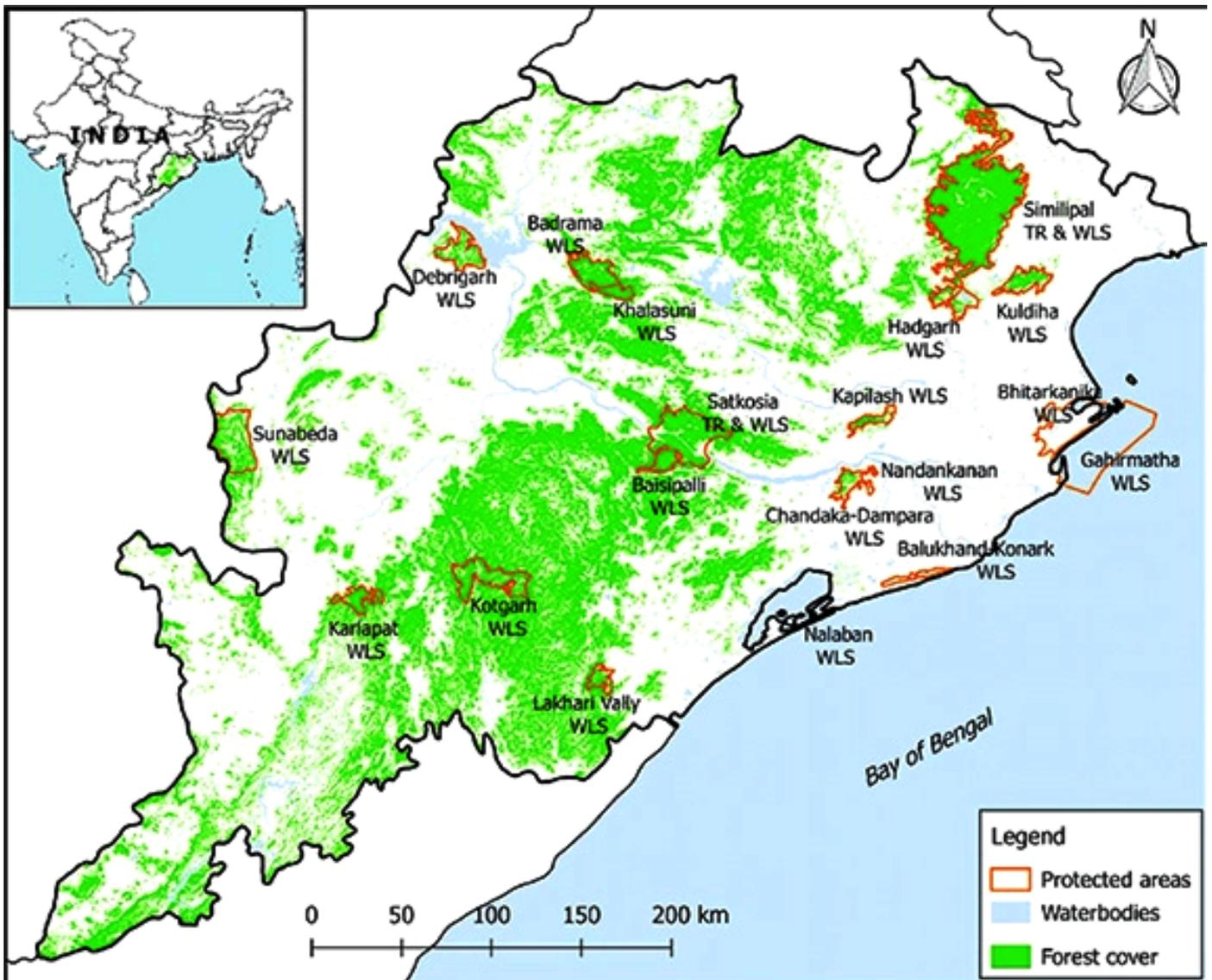
- **Hunting and poaching** for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam.
- They are believed to be the **world's most trafficked mammal**.

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
 - Chinese Pangolin is 'critically endangered'
- **CITES:** Appendix I

Nandankanan Zoological Park

- It is 15 kms from Odisha's capital, Bhubaneswar. It was inaugurated in 1960.
- First zoo in the country to become **a member of the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums (WAZA)**.
 - WAZA is the global alliance of regional associations, national federations, zoos and aquariums, dedicated to the care and conservation of animals and their habitats around the world.
- It is recognized as a leading zoo for the breeding of the **Indian pangolin** and **white tiger**.
 - Leopards, mouse deer, lions, rats and vultures are also bred here.
- It was the world's first captive crocodile breeding centre, where **gharials** were bred in captivity in 1980.
- The State Botanical Garden of Nandankanan is one of the pioneering plant conservation and nature education centres of Odisha.



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