



Increase in the Number of Snow Leopards in Uttarakhand

Why in News

- On October 23, 2022, on the occasion of World Snow Leopard Day, the Uttarakhand Forest Department released data about them. According to the data provided, there are about 121 snow leopards in the state. During an auction in 2016, their number was around 86.

Key Points

- According to forest department data, the snow leopard clan is increasing in the Himalayan regions of Uttarakhand, which is a good sign in terms of biodiversity. Snow leopard is one of the most beautiful and rare creatures in the world. Efforts were going on in the state for a long time to count snow leopards and preserve this rare creature, successful results of these efforts have also been seen now.
- Chief Wildlife Warden Sameer Sinha said that a survey of 12764.35 sq km of the area available for snow leopards in the state has been conducted. This counting was completed in 2 steps. It included Govind National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, Kedarnath Wildlife Division, high terrestrial areas of Nanda Devi Biosphere and Trans Himalayan region of Uttarakhand.
- According to this scientific study, the estimated number of snow leopards in Uttarakhand was estimated at 121. Snow leopards live in the Himalayan region of the state with an altitude of 3000 meters. The movements of snow leopards are often seen in camera traps. Snow leopards have also been seen many times in the Nelang Valley of Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand.
- The scientific name of the snow leopard is ***Panthera uncia***. The snow leopard serves as an indicator of mountain ecosystem health due to its position as the top predator in the food chain.
- The snow leopard has been listed on the IUCN's Red List of World Conservation Species. It is also listed in Appendix-I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). It is listed in Schedule-I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The Government of India has identified the snow leopard as a major species of high Himalayas. India has been a part of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation (GSLEP) programme since 2013.
- In October 2020, a community volunteer programme called 'Himalaya Sanrakshak' was launched to protect snow leopards.
- In the year 2019, the First National Protocol on 'Snow Leopard Population Assessment' was also launched, which is very useful for monitoring its population.
- The 'Snow Leopard Project' was launched in 2009 to promote an inclusive and participatory approach to conservation of snow leopards and their habitat.
- Snow Leopard Conservation Breeding Programme has been launched at Panja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- It is noteworthy that the mountainous landscape of Central Asia has a huge, but fragmentary distribution of snow leopard, covering different parts of the Himalayas, such as Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.
- Snow leopards live in high mountainous areas that are at an altitude of 18,000 feet, most such areas are in the Himalayas. China and Mongolia have the highest number of snow leopards. They are also found in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Russia.
- The Bishkek Declaration was adopted during the first Global Forum on Conservation of Snow Leopards on October 23, 2013. The forum was held in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. In 2014, to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Bishkek Declaration, twelve countries on stage

declared **October 23 as International Snow Leopard Day.**

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