



IUCN Red List Update 2023

[Source: IUCN](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Red List](#) underwent an update, featuring thousands of new species assessments and reassessments.

- This information was presented at the [28th Conference of Parties](#), shedding light on the escalating impacts of climate change on a diverse range of species.
- The IUCN Red List now includes 157,190 species, of which 44,016 are threatened with extinction.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Climate Change Threatens Diverse Species:**
 - Species ranging from Atlantic salmon to green turtles face growing threats due to [climate change](#).
 - IUCN Director General, emphasises the urgency of ambitious **climate action to combat species decline**.
 - The IUCN Red List update underscores the interlinked nature of climate and **biodiversity crises**, urging joint efforts for sustainable solutions.
- **Freshwater Fish Assessment:**
 - The first comprehensive assessment of **global freshwater fish species is revealed**.
 - **25% of assessed freshwater fish species are at risk of extinction.**
 - Climate change, pollution, [overfishing](#), and invasive species contribute to the decline.
- **Impact on Atlantic Salmon:**
 - Atlantic salmon (**Salmo salar**) are ray-finned fish that can grow up to a meter long, found in the North Atlantic Ocean basin. They are **anadromous**, meaning they live in both fresh and saltwater.
 - Atlantic salmon population declined by 23% (2006-2020), moving them from Least Concern to Near Threatened.
- **Green Turtles Facing Extinction:**
 - Central South Pacific and East Pacific [green turtle](#) populations are respectively Endangered and Vulnerable.
 - Climate change poses threats throughout their life cycle, impacting hatching success and food sources.
- **Mahogany Trees Facing Endangerment:**
 - The big-leaf mahogany (**Swietenia macrophylla**), a sought-after timber tree, shifts from Vulnerable to Endangered.
 - Unsustainable harvest, **urban encroachment**, and **illegal logging** contribute to a **60% reduction over 180 years**.
- **Conservation Success Stories:**
 - **Scimitar-horned oryx, a desert antelope** moves from **Extinct in the Wild to Endangered**, showcasing successful reintroduction efforts in the Republic of Chad.
 - [Saiga antelope](#) improves from **Critically Endangered to Near Threatened** due to conservation measures.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List

- The IUCN Red List is the foremost global resource for **assessing the risk of extinction among animals, fungi, and plant species**.
- Accessible to all, it serves as a **crucial indicator of global biodiversity health**, it offers comprehensive insights into species' characteristics, threats, and conservation measures, playing a pivotal role in shaping informed conservation decisions and policies.
- The IUCN Red List Categories define the extinction risk of species assessed. Nine categories extend from **NE (Not Evaluated) to EX (Extinct)**. **Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU)** species are considered to be threatened with extinction.
 - It is also a key indicator for the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [Aichi Targets](#).
- The IUCN Red List includes the **IUCN Green Status of Species**, which **assesses the recovery of species' populations** and measures their conservation success.
 - There are eight Green Status Categories: Extinct in the Wild, Critically Depleted, Largely Depleted, Moderately Depleted, Slightly Depleted, Fully Recovered, Non-Depleted and Indeterminate.
- A Green Status assessment examines how conservation actions have affected the current Red List status.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. 'Invasive Species Specialist Group' (that develops Global Invasive Species Database) belongs to which one of the following organizations?(2023)

- (a) The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- (b) The United Nations Environment Programme
- (c) The United Nations World Commission for Environment and Development
- (d) The World Wide Fund for Nature

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The **Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)** is a **global network of scientific and policy experts on invasive species**, organized under the auspices of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. Hence, option (a) is correct.
- **It was established in 1994.**
- The ISSG manages the **Global Invasive Species Database (GISD)**, which provides information on invasive alien species worldwide. The ISSG also maintains other online resources such as the **Aliens-L listserv, the Invasive Species Compendium, the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species, and the Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa.**

