



World Lion Day 2022

Why in News?

[World Lion Day](#) is observed on 10th August annually to spread awareness and educate people about lions and their conservation.

What is World Lion Day and its Significance?

- **About:**
 - World Lion Day aims at **spreading awareness of lions and the urgent need to strive toward their conservation** and to make everyone aware of the significance of lions in their natural habitat.
 - The initiative to protect the big cats **started in 2013 and the first World Lion Day was celebrated that year.**
- **Significance:**
 - An opportunity to understand **the place of lions in the ecological cycle and why their extinction can be an alarming sign** for humans.
 - Lions supposedly wandered through Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East some three million years ago, however, their numbers have significantly decreased by about 95% over the course of five decades.

What are the Key Points Related to Lion?

- **Scientific Name:** *Panthera leo*
 - The lion is divided into **two subspecies**: the African lion (*Panthera leo leo*) and the [Asiatic lion \(*Panthera leo persica*\)](#).
 - Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
 - The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.
- **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.

What are Conservation Efforts?

- [Project Lion](#)
- [Asiatic Lion Conservation Project](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- Asiatic lions were once found in regions ranging from Persia (Iran) to Eastern India. By late 1890s range of Asiatic lions got restricted to the Gir forest range of Gujarat, India. With the continuous efforts of the State and Union Government, the population of Asiatic lions increased from 523 in 2015 to 674 in 2020. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The double-humped camel is a native of the Gobi Desert and is found on a vast expanse of cold-desert areas across Mongolia, China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and parts of Afghanistan. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The one horned rhinoceros are found in North- Eastern India and the Terai grasslands of Nepal. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

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