



# World Lion Day, 2021

## Why in News

Every year, World Lion day is observed on **10<sup>th</sup> August** to raise awareness about the conservation of lions.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- The **initiative to protect the big cats started in 2013** and the first World Lion Day was celebrated that year.
- There has been a **decline in 80% of the population of lions** in the past 100 years.
  - This is the major reason for the observance of the day to protect these wild cats in their natural habitat.
- This also works on the **safety measures of the lion communities.**

### ▪ 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*).
- **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.**

### ▪ Conservation Efforts:

- **Project Lion:** Six new sites apart from the Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) have been identified under Project Lion that was announced in August 2020, on the lines of Project Tiger and [Project Elephant](#).
  - The programme has been launched **for the conservation of the Asiatic Lion, whose last remaining wild population is in Gujarat's Asiatic Lion Landscape (ALL)**.
- Earlier, the **"Asiatic Lion Conservation Project"** was launched by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**. It was approved **for three financial years from 2018 to 2021**.
  - It envisaged **scientific management with the involvement of communities** in coordination with multi-sectoral agencies for disease control and veterinary care for overall conservation of Asiatic lions.
  - The **Lion census is conducted once every five years**.
- The **other biggest cats** found mostly in India, including the **Royal Bengal Tiger**, **Indian leopard**, [Clouded Leopard](#), and [Snow leopard](#).

**Source: HT**

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