



IUCN Assessment of the Himalayan Wolf

For Prelims: Himalayan Wolf, [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)'s Red List](#), [Ladakh and Spiti Valley](#), [Sustainable Development Goals](#), [Aichi Targets](#).

For Mains: Reasons for the population decline of Himalayan Wolves, Measures to Protect the Himalayan Wolves, Conservation.

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

The Himalayan Wolf (*Canis lupus chanco*), a prominent lupine predator found across the Himalayas has been assessed for the first time in the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)'s Red List](#).

What Are the Key Facts About Himalayan Wolf?

- **About:**
 - The Himalayan Wolf is a mysterious lupine predator that **inhabits the high elevations of the Himalayas**.
 - Characterized by distinctive genetic markers, its mitochondrial DNA suggests a genetic foundation predating the Holarctic grey wolf.
- **Habitat:**
 - It is found in parts of **China, Nepal, India, and Bhutan** and typically lives in alpine meadows and grasslands at elevations of 10,000 to 18,000 feet.
 - They usually travel in small packs and hunt wild sheep and goats, sometimes even preying on marmots, hares, and birds.
- **Population Status:**
 - Population estimate of **2,275-3,792 mature individuals**, all within a subpopulation across the Himalayan range of Nepal, India, and the Tibetan Plateau.
 - Indian section has 227-378 mature individuals, **primarily in Ladakh and Spiti Valley**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

HIMALAYAN WOLF

CANIS LUPUS HIMALAYENSIS



What is the 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.

Why is the Population of Himalayan Wolf Continuously Declining?

- **Habitat Destruction:** The IUCN Red List Assessment has highlighted an ongoing reduction in the area, extent, and quality of habitat for Himalayan wolves.
- **Depredation Conflict:** Depredation conflict is a major conservation concern, given a seasonal or permanent high livestock abundance in wolf habitats that often form summer pastureland for livestock grazing.
 - These conflicts result in a negative attitude towards wolf conservation and often trigger retaliatory killing
- **Hybridization with Dogs:** The report pointed out that a growing problem for Himalayan wolves in Ladakh and Spiti is **interbreeding with domestic dogs**. This is becoming more challenging because there are more feral dogs in these areas.
 - Hybridization can contribute to increased competition for resources, such as territory and prey, between wolves and wolf-dog hybrids.
- **Illegal Hunting:** The wolf is also illegally hunted for **trade in its fur and body parts including paws**, tongues, heads, and other parts. However, hunting of these wolves is not legal in all range

states.

What Measures Should be Taken to Protect the Himalayan Wolves?

- **Secure and Restore:** Securing and restoring healthy wild prey populations and landscapes and setting aside wildlife habitat refuges.
- **Improve Guarding Methods:** Improving livestock guarding methods, such as predator-proof corral pens and **using sustainable livestock herding practices**, including reduced livestock loads, adapted herding, and developing novel but tradition-based holistic management practices will enhance the conservation of wolves.
- **Management of Feral Dog Populations:** By managing the populations of feral dogs, the ecological balance in wolf habitats can be preserved.
- **Transboundary Efforts :** This transboundary interconnectedness is vital for the unimpeded movement of wolf populations and the safeguarding of their natural behaviors, achieved through coordinated research and monitoring initiatives

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

Mains

Q. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in conservation of flora and fauna? (2018)

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