



State Animal and Bird: Ladakh

Why in News

Recently, Ladakh has adopted [Snow Leopard](#) and [Black-Necked Crane](#), as State animal and State bird, two years after it was carved out as a separate [Union Territory \(UT\)](#) from the erstwhile State of J&K (Jammu and Kashmir).

Key Points

▪ Snow Leopard:

◦ About:



- **Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) act as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem** in which they live, due to their position as the **top predator in the food web.**

◦ Habitat:

- Mountainous regions of central and southern Asia. In India, their geographical range encompasses:
 - **Western Himalayas:** Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh.
 - **Eastern Himalayas:** Uttarakhand and Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Snow Leopard capital of the world:** Hemis, Ladakh.
- **Hemis National Park** is the biggest national park in India and also has a good presence of Snow Leopard.

◦ Threats:

- Reduction in prey populations.
- **Illegal poaching and increased human population** infiltration into the species habitat.
- **Illegal trade** of wildlife parts and products.

- **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN](#): Vulnerable.
- [CITES](#): Appendix I
- [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act 1972](#): Schedule I
- It is also listed in the [Convention on Migratory Species \(CMS\)](#), affording the highest conservation status to the species, both globally and in India.

- **Black-Necked Crane:**



- **About:**

- The black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*), also known as Tibetan crane, is a **large bird and medium-sized crane**.
- **Both the sexes** are almost of the **same size** but **male is slightly bigger** than female.
- A conspicuous **red crown adorns the head**.

- **Habitat:**

- The high altitude wetlands of the **Tibetan plateau**, Sichuan (China), and eastern **Ladakh** (India) are the main breeding ground of the species; the **birds spend winter at lower altitudes**.
- In **Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh**, it only comes **during the winters**.

- **Threats:**

- **Damage to the eggs** and chicks, caused by feral dogs.
- Loss of habitat due to **human pressure (Development Projects)** on the wetlands.
- Increased **grazing pressure on the limited pastures** near the wetlands.

- **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN Red List](#): Near Threatened
- [CITES](#): Appendix I
- [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I

Ladakh

- It was established as a **Union Territory (UT)** of India on 31st October 2019, following the enactment of the [Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act](#).
 - Before that, it was part of the **Jammu and Kashmir state**.
- It is the **largest and the second least populous** union territory of India.
- It extends from the [Siachen Glacier](#) in the [Karakoram Range](#) to the north to the main Great Himalayas to the south.
 - The eastern end, consisting of the uninhabited [Aksai Chin Plains](#), is claimed by the Indian Government as part of Ladakh, and has been under Chinese control since 1962.

- The **largest town in Ladakh is Leh**, followed by **Kargil**, each of which headquarters a district.
 - The Leh district contains the **Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys**.
 - The Kargil district contains the **Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys**.
- Earlier, in 2020 Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a temporary and short duration **face-off** along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** at Naku La (Sikkim) and near Pangong Tso Lake (**Eastern Ladakh**).
 - However, recently India and China have agreed in principle to **disengage at a key patrol point in eastern Ladakh**.



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