



Arabian Leopards and Wolves

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

At present times, both the **Arabian wolf and Arabian leopard** are [critically endangered](#), with the leopard having lost 98% of its historical range and is believed to be extinct in its northern range, including the **Negev and Judean deserts**.

Dhib and Nimr: Dhib and Nimr are the Arabic terms for the two animals (wolf and leopard respectively).



What are the Characteristics of the Arabian Leopards and Wolves?

▪ Arabian Wolves:

◦ About:

- The **Arabian wolf (*Canis lupus arabs*)**, is a subspecies of the gray wolf. The Arabian wolf holds the distinction of being the **world's smallest wolf**, making it a unique and significant part of the region's wildlife.

◦ Geographical Spread:

- These wolves are native to the [Arabian Peninsula](#), including regions such as the **Negev Desert in southern Israel and parts of the Middle East**.

◦ Significance:

- In the Negev Desert and Arava Valley of southern Israel, **the Arabian wolf remains a resilient apex predator, playing a vital ecological role**. These wolves are adapted to life in arid environments with limited productivity.
- Arabian wolves are known to **"suppress" populations of smaller canids like jackals and foxes**, helping to regulate the ecosystem in the Negev Desert.
- These wolves are a crucial part of the desert ecosystem and contribute to

maintaining herbivore populations and consuming carrion, which underscores their ecological importance.

▪ **Arabian Leopards:**

◦ **About:**

- The Arabian leopard (**Panthera pardus nimr**), is another iconic but **critically endangered species** native to the Arabian Peninsula. These leopards were historically found in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula, including the Negev and Judaeen deserts.

◦ **Geographical Spread:**

- Unfortunately, the status of the Arabian leopard in these regions is dire. A recent study published in 2023 reported that the Arabian leopard has lost **most of its historical range**, and its populations have become highly isolated and fragmented.
- In the Negev and Judaeen deserts, **this species is considered extinct in its entire northern range**.

▪ **Conservation Efforts for Both Arabian Wolves and Leopards:**

- From an ecological perspective, it would **require adequate prey availability, suitable habitat, and protection from human persecution**.
- However, the **competition between wild and domestic prey, overgrazing of vulnerable vegetation, and conflicts with herders pose significant challenges**.
- Efforts are being made to **increase tolerance and coexistence with Arabian wolves, especially in pastoralist landscapes**. Education about the ecological role of these wolves is being promoted.
- It is recommended to **reduce hunting rates, not only of wolves but also of their prey**, to support the recovery of the wolf's natural prey base.

What is the Present Context of these two animals?

- Moreover, the ongoing conflicts in the region, such as those between **Israel and Palestine**, could further complicate conservation efforts for the Arabian leopard.
- The response of large carnivores like leopards to armed conflicts can vary, and **cooperation between different sectors is essential for successful conservation**.
- Conservation efforts could potentially serve as a means to **build bridges between human groups in conflict**, promoting the shared conservation of natural heritage.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q 1. 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)

Q. Which one of the following groups of animals belongs to the category of endangered species? (2012)

- (a) Great Indian Bustard, Musk Deer, Red Panda and Asiatic Wild Ass
- (b) Kashmir Stag, Cheetal, Blue Bull and Great Indian Bustard
- (c) Snow Leopard, Swamp Deer, Rhesus Monkey and Saras (Crane)

(d) Lion-tailed Macaque, Blue Bull, Hanuman Langur and Cheetal

Ans: (a)

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