



## Dholes

### Why in News?

A new study has reported the **presence of dholes or Asiatic wild dogs** in the high mountains of Central Asia nearly 30 years after their presence was last recorded.

- The animals have been discovered in the Bek-Tosot Conservancy in the Osh region of southern Kyrgyzstan, a few kilometres from the Tajik border. It lies in the **Pamir mountain range of Xinjiang Autonomous Region**, China.



### What do we Know About Dholes?

- About:** Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*) is a wild carnivorous animal and is a member of the family Canidae and the class **Mammalia**.
  - They are also known as **Asian wild dogs**.
- Habitat:**



- Historically, dholes purportedly occurred throughout **southern Russia, all across central Asia, south Asia and southeast Asia**.
  - According to recent research and current distribution maps, they are **restricted to south and southeast Asia**, with the northernmost populations in China.
  - In India, they are **found in three clusters** across India namely the Western and Eastern Ghats, central Indian landscape and North East India.
    - Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh rank high in the conservation of the endangered dhole in India, according to a study (2020).
- **Ecological role:** Dholes play an important role as apex predators in forest ecosystems.

## What is the Conservation Status of Dholes?

- IUCN List of Threatened Species: Endangered
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix II
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 : Schedule II

## Why is their Population Decreasing?

- **Ongoing habitat loss**: Due to deforestation and fragmentation of forest corridors.
- **Depletion of prey base**: Ungulates are the main prey of dholes whose population is rapidly decreasing due to excessive hunting and habitat loss.
- **Persecution due to livestock predation** and disease transfer from domestic and feral dogs.

**Source: DTE**