



16th Asiatic Lion Census 2025

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

[Asiatic lion \(*Panthera leo persica*\)](#) population in Gujarat goes up from 674 to 891 in 5 years, according to the 16th census 2025 released by the Gujarat Forest Department.

What are the Key Findings of 16th Asiatic Lion Census 2025?

- **Total Population:** 891 Asiatic lions recorded in Gujarat, a 32.2% increase from 674 lions in 2020 (15th census).
- **Population Distribution:** 384 lions live inside protected forest and sanctuary areas. **Lions in non-forested areas have risen from 340 in 2020 to 507 in 2025.**
 - 44.22% of the lion population now resides outside traditional protected habitats.
 - [Gir National Park](#) and adjoining sanctuaries (**Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pania Wildlife Sanctuary**) house 394 lions, forming the core population.
 - **Amreli district has the highest count with 257 lions**, while Mityala Wildlife Sanctuary doubled its population to 32 lions.
 - **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** near Porbandar has become a newly established lion population area, with 17 lions recorded, the first since 1879.
 - The 2025 census also **identified new satellite populations** around Jetpur and Babra-Jasdan.
- **Adult Females:** **330 adult females recorded, a 27% rise since 2020**, indicating strong potential for further growth.
- **Reasons of Population Boom:** [Project Lion](#) has helped in restoring habitats, **strengthening the prey base**, and mitigating conflicts to support Asiatic lion conservation.
- **Census methodology:** Conducted using **direct beat verification** (the area was divided into regions, zones, and sub-zones with designated officials, enumerators, supervisors, and volunteers), **a more scientific and statistically robust method** compared to **pugmark-based tiger surveys**.
 - **Completed in just three days**, unlike the tiger census which takes two years.

What is Project Lion?

- **Project Lion:** Announced in 2020, Project Lion is a long-term initiative aimed at securing the future of **Asiatic lions** by creating a sustainable environment that enhances the overall health of their ecosystems.
 - The project, being implemented in the Gir landscape in Gujarat, focuses on habitat improvement, the use of advanced technologies such as **radio-collaring and camera traps for monitoring**, and the mitigation of human-wildlife conflict.
 - The Gujarat Forest Department plays a central role in implementing these conservation measures, conducting regular lion censuses to track population trends and health.
- **Technologies in Lion Conservation:** Advanced tools such as **Global Positioning System-based tracking** are used to monitor lions and vehicles, ensuring efficient surveillance.
 - An **automated sensor grid**, which includes magnetic, movement, and infrared heat

sensors, helps detect and track wildlife activity.

- **Geographic Information System (GIS)**-based real-time monitoring enables timely analysis, report generation, and effective management of conservation efforts.



Asiatic Lion

Panthera Leo Persica

Features

- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.

Habitat

- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (Gujarat) is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.

Protection Status

- Endangered: IUCN Red List
- Appendix I: CITES
- Schedule I: Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972

Threats

- Human Animal Conflict
- Poaching
- Genetic Inbreeding
- Diseases such as plague, canine distemper

Conservation Efforts

- Asiatic Lion Conservation Project
- Project Lion
- World Lion Day (10th August)



ASIATIC LION Or INDIAN LION

Scientific Name: Panthera leo persica

Weight: Male: 150-250 kg
Female: 120-180 kg

Length (head and body): Male: 1.7-2.5 m
Female: 1.4-1.75 m

Birth Interval: 18-26 Months

Typical Diet: Carnivorous

Lifespan: 16-18 Years



FUN FACTS

- Lions live in large groups called prides.
- Male lions can weigh over 500 pounds and grow up to eight feet in length.
- Known as the “King of the Jungle,” lions live in grasslands and plains, not jungles.
- Female lions and their sisters live together for life, while males stay with the pride until they reach maturity.
- A lion’s roar can be heard from up to five miles away.
- Lions spend about 20 hours a day resting or sleeping.
- Male lions patrol their territories regularly.
- Lions prefer to hunt at night, making it easier to catch prey.

Note: The [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) released the **first Green Status Assessment for lions in 2025**, providing a global standard to measure species recovery and conservation impact.

- **IUCN Green Status of Species covers all species** except microorganisms and uses **eight categories** (Extinct in the Wild, Critically Depleted, Largely Depleted, Moderately Depleted, Slightly Depleted, Fully Recovered, Non-Depleted and Indeterminate).
- **Unlike the IUCN Red List**, which focuses on extinction risk, the **Green Status highlights recovery potential and necessary conservation actions**. Lions have been placed in the **Largely Depleted** category.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. 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)

