

## 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?

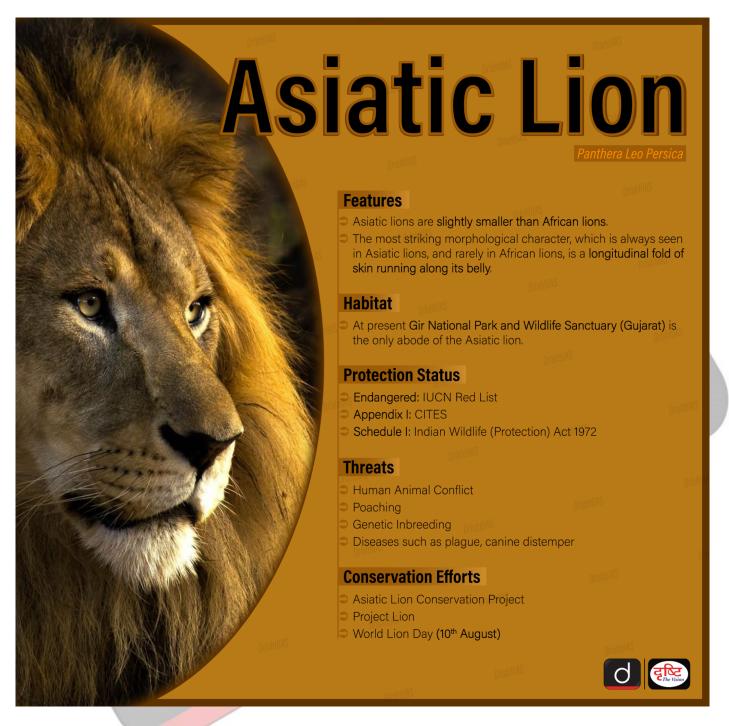
- **Total Population:** 891 Asiatic lions recorded in Gujarat, a 32.2% increase from 674 lions in 2020 (15th census).
- Population Distribution: 384 lions live inside protected forest and sanctuary areas. Lions in non-forested areas have risen from 340 in 2020 to 507 in 2025.
  - 44.22% of the lion population 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 Babralasdan.
- Adult Females: 330 adult females recorded, a 27% rise since 2020, indicating strong potential for further growth.
- Reasons of Population Boom: <u>Project Lion</u> 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.

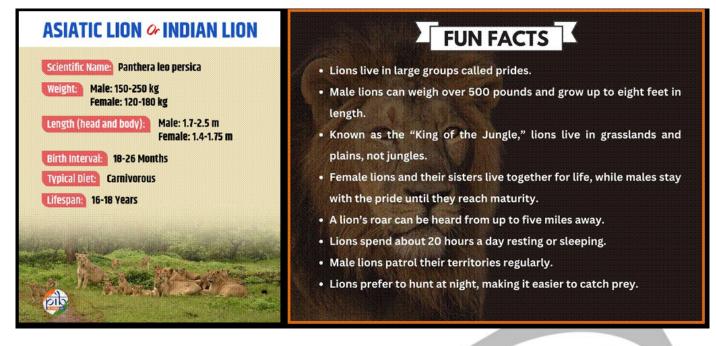
# What is Project Lion?

- 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 Systembased 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.





**Note:** The <u>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</u> released the <u>first Green Status</u> **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)

