



India's First Wolf Sanctuary in Jharkhand

Why in News?

The **Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary** in **Jharkhand's Latehar district** is India's first and only sanctuary dedicated to [wolves](#).



Key Points

- **About Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary:**
 - The Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary lies within a landscape inhabited largely by **Sarna Dharma-following tribal communities**.
 - Over 80% of the local population practices [Sarna Dharma](#), a **nature-worshipping faith** that venerates forests, rivers, and natural elements.
 - **Traditional Beliefs Supporting Wolf Conservation:**
 - One striking cultural practice involves seasonal avoidance of [Sal forests](#) during winter months (November to February), coinciding with the Sal tree's sacred blooming season.
 - This cultural reverence unintentionally creates periods of minimal human disturbance, aligning perfectly with the **wolves' critical breeding and denning season**.
- **Insights from Scientific Research:**
 - A **recent** study published in **Nature's Scientific Reports**, titled "**Den site selection by Indian gray wolves in tribal landscapes of Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary considering ecological and cultural factors**", examined how wolves choose den sites in this unique cultural-ecological setting.
 - Researchers hypothesised that wolves would prefer physically challenging terrains for dens while also benefiting from culturally imposed human avoidance zones.
- **Future of Indian Wolves:**
 - The **future of the Indian gray wolf** and other lesser-known carnivores may hinge on **blending scientific understanding with respect for traditional knowledge**.
 - Conservation strategies must move beyond mere legal frameworks to engage cultural values that have long safeguarded ecosystems naturally.

Indian Grey Wolf

- **About:** Indian grey wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) is a subspecies of grey wolf found across Southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent.
 - It lives in **smaller packs and is less vocal** compared to other wolf subspecies.
 - It is **primarily nocturnal**, hunting from dusk to dawn.
- **Habitat:** It is an apex predator in India's **scrublands, grasslands** and **semi-arid agro-ecosystems**. Thrives in regions with warmer temperatures.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN: Endangered** (population in India: **2,000 - 3,000** individuals).
 - **CITES: Appendix I.**
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I.**

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