



Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Caracal, a medium-sized and locally threatened cat, was seen for the first time in [Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve](#) of Rajasthan .



Key Points

- **About Caracal:**
 - **Scientific Name:** *Caracal Caracal Schmitzi*
 - **The caracal** is a **nocturnal cat species** found in **Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia** .
 - It is identified by **its long, pointed and black tufted ears** . Its name is derived from the Turkish word '**karakulak**' , which means **black ears** .
 - It is an **extremely agile predator** , known for **its fast speed and long jumping ability** . **Its main diet** is **small hoofed animals and rodents** .
- **Historical Importance:**
 - **The caracal** has been an **important part** of Indian wildlife . It is mentioned in historical texts such as **Khamsa-i-Nizami and Shahnama** , indicating its usefulness in hunting. It was once found in various biological provinces across **13 states of India** .
- **Distribution:**

- They are found mostly in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and are located in **Kutch, the Malwa Plateau, the Aravalli hill range.**
- Besides India, the caracal is found in several dozen countries across **Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia.**
- **Habitats:**
 - It occurs in semi-deserts, steppes, savannah, scrubland, dry forest and moist woodland or evergreen forest.
 - It prefers open terrain and drier, scrubby, arid habitats and needs cover.
- **Declination in numbers:**
 - The number of Caracal in India has reduced to **less than 50 .**
 - **Between 2001 and 2020, their population** has declined by more than 95%.
 - Their staple food has become scarce due to **habitat loss and urbanization .**
- **Conservation status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
 - In 2021, **the National Board for Wildlife** and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change classified the caracal as a **critically endangered species.**

Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

- It is located in the **Hadauti region of Rajasthan**, spread over an area of 759 square kilometres across **four districts of Rajasthan - Kota, Bundi, Chittaurgarh and Jhalawar.**
 - It consists of a core area of 417 square kilometres and a buffer zone of 342 square kilometres.
- It was **declared a protected area in 1955.** The trees in the forest here are very thick and dense.
- This tiger reserve is surrounded by **four rivers Ramzan, Aahu, Kali and Chambal** and is situated **between two parallel hills Mukundra and Gagrola .** It falls under the drainage area of the tributaries of **Chambal river.**
- Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve is the **third largest tiger reserve in Rajasthan** after **Ranthambore and Sariska Tiger Reserves.**
- The Government of Rajasthan, in collaboration with **the National Tiger Conservation Authority**, declared it a Tiger Reserve in the year 2013 under **the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 .**