INDIAN LEOPARD

Posted at: 04/03/2024

Context:

According to a recent report, India's leopard population rose by 8% from 12,582 in 2018 to 13874 in 2022.

Background:

Indian Leopard is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and included in Appendix I of CITES.It is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List

Findings:

1. India's leopard population is estimated at 13,874 individuals (with a range of 12,616 to 15,132).
2. This represents a stable population compared to the similar area sampled in 2018, which had 12,852 individuals.
3. The estimate covers 70% of leopard habitat, excluding regions like the Himalayas and semi-arid parts that are not tiger habitat.

Regional Trends:

1. Central India: Shows a stable or slightly growing leopard population (2018: 8,071, 2022: 8,820).
2. Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains: Experienced a decline (2018: 1,253, 2022: 1,109).
3. Overall Growth Rate: Across India, the sampled area showed a 1.08% per annum growth.
4. Highest Growth Rate: Central India and Eastern Ghats exhibited the highest growth rate at 1.5%.

State-wise Distribution:

1. Madhya Pradesh: Houses the largest leopard population in the country with 3,907 individuals (2018: 3,421).
2. Maharashtra: Follows with 1,985 leopards (2018: 1,690).
3. Karnataka: Stands third with 1,879 leopards (2018: 1,783).
4. Tiger Reserves: Nagarajunasagar Srisailam (Andhra Pradesh), Panna (Madhya Pradesh), and Satpura (Madhya Pradesh) have the highest leopard populations.

State-wise Trends:

1. Madhya Pradesh: Witnessed the most significant uptick, with an increase of 486 leopards.
2. Arunachal Pradesh: Led in terms of percentages, with a whopping 282% increase.
3. Goa, Bihar, Telangana, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha reported declines.

4. Odisha witnessed a staggering drop of 192 leopards or 25% between 2018 and 2022.
5. Uttarakhand experienced a decline in leopard numbers but significant growth in tiger numbers.