

Man-Animal Conflict - Indian Gaur

Why in news?

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The Indian gaur population increases around the tourist towns of Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Gudalur in Tamil Nadu.

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What is happening?

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- Recently, four people were killed and eight others suffered injuries during conflicts with Indian gaur in the Nilgiris North Division alone since September 2016.

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- There has been a dramatic rise in the Indian gaur population as well as an increase in the human population in the habitats nearby.

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- In the Nilgiris North Forest Division, **awareness campaigns** have been conducted in many places where humans share the landscape with the Indian Gaur.

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- There was serious consideration of **mass translocation of the gaurs**.

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What do the environmentalists say?

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- Environmentalists said conflicts between gaur and humans would only intensify, as the **lack of natural predators** that hunt the animal in the upper slopes of the Nilgiris.

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- But they point out that translocation is not feasible, as introducing large herbivores to the extremely sensitive **Sigur plateau** could have even more serious consequences on the local wildlife.
- It can put an **even greater strain on the resources** available to the wildlife there, which already have to compete with cattle and livestock herds.
- It is noticed that there is a **huge behavioural difference** between the Indian gaur that live in urban landscapes, around the towns, and the animals that inhabit the MTR.

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- The gaurs in towns are acclimatised to people, cars and buildings, and are unfazed by human activity.
- These animals have very little chance of surviving in a completely wild habitat if trans-located.

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Indian Gaur:

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- The Gaur also called **Indian Bison**, is the largest extant bovine, native to South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- It has been listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List.
- Gaur historically occurred throughout mainland South and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Nepal.
- Gaur are largely confined to evergreen forests or semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests, but also occur in deciduous forest areas at the periphery of their range.
- Gaur is highly **threatened by poaching** for trade to supply international markets.

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Source: The Hindu

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