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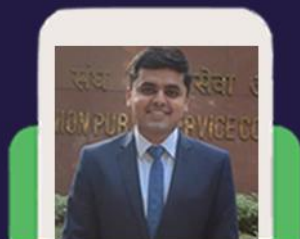


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HRIDYA S VIJAYAN (UPSC AIR 317)

My contact with civilscafe started with the free mains Answer writing in the telegram channel..Thoufeek sir and Tojin sir helped me in this giving individual and thorough feedback which helped me improve my answer writing even before prelims.. The interview guidance also helped me in boosting my confidence and finding expected questions..

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SPECIES IN NEWS

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PRELIMS FINAL PUNCH – Quick Facts - Species

1. BLACK SOFTSHELL TURTLE

A major temple in Assam has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with two green NGOs for long-term conservation of the rare freshwater black softshell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*).

- It is also called Bostami turtle
- It is a freshwater species found in India and Bangladesh.
- Their scientific name is *Nilssonia nigricans*
- IUCN Status: Critically Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- It has no legal protection under Wildlife Protection Act



2. PYROSTRIA LALJI

Pyrostria laljii, a new species which belongs to the genus of the coffee family has recently been discovered from the Andaman Islands.

- The species belongs to the genus of the coffee.
- It is a 15-meter-tall tree.
- Plants belonging to genus *Pyrostria* are usually found in Madagascar but the recently discovered species is new to science
- It can be distinguished by a long stem with a whitish coating on the trunk
- It has oblong-ovate leaves with a cuneate base, and was first reported from South Andaman's Wandoor forest.
- Its umbellate inflorescence with eight to 12 flowers is also a distinct feature.
- IUCN Status:- **Critically Endangered**



3. GHARIALS

Punjab government in collaboration with the World-Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) has released a lot of 24 gharials (*Gavialis Gangeticus*) into the Beas Conservation Reserve.

- Gharials are a type of Asian crocodylian distinguished by their long, thin snouts.
- IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered
- Listed on Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Natural Habitat: Fresh waters of the northern India.
- Population of Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.
- Conservation Efforts: Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).



4. RED EARED SLIDER

Red Eared Slider Turtles are threatening to invade the natural water bodies across the Northeast region in India.

- The red-eared slider is a semi-aquatic turtle belonging to the family Emydidae.
- Native to the U.S. and northern Mexico, this turtle is an extremely popular pet due to its small size, easy maintenance, and relatively low cost.
- These turtles are considered one of the world's worst invasive species. This is because they grow fast and virtually leave nothing for the native species to eat.



5. WHITEFLIES

Exotic invasive whiteflies in India are causing direct and indirect yield losses in agriculture, horticulture and forestry crop plants.

- Whiteflies are tiny, sap-sucking insects that may become abundant in vegetable and ornamental plantings, especially during warm weather.
- They excrete sticky honeydew and cause yellowing or death of leaves.
- They are members of the insect family Aleyrodidae (order Homoptera)
- Most of the whitefly species are native to the Caribbean islands or Central America.

- Around eight types of whitefly species are found in India. The first invasive whitefly was reported from Kerala in 1995. These species are now distributed throughout India except Jammu & Kashmir.



6. ARGOSTEMMA QUARANTENA

A new plant species belonging to the coffee family spotted in the scenic Wagamon hills in Kerala has been named *Argostemma quarantena*

- A delicate herbaceous species from the family Rubiaceae,
- It is a new plant species belonging to the coffee family.
- It grows to a height of 3-7cm and is characterised by striking white flowers.
- It has been named *Argostemma quarantena* to commemorate the millions who have died in the pandemic.
- The species has been classified Data Deficient (DD) under IUCN standards



7. INDIAN ROSEWOOD

India has proposed to remove rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*) from Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.

- *Dalbergia sissoo*, known commonly as North Indian rosewood or shisham, is a fast-growing, hardy, deciduous rosewood tree native to the Indian subcontinent and southern Iran.
- The species is currently part of Appendix II of CITES that has species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival.
- The species grows at a very fast rate and has the capacity to become naturalised outside its native range, even it is invasive in some parts of the world.
- IUCN Status is Least Concern
- It is native to the foothills of the Himalayas. It is primarily found growing along river banks below 900 metres (3,000 ft) elevation, but can range naturally up to 1,300 m (4,300 ft).



8. HYBODONT SHARKS

In a rare discovery, teeth of new species of hybodont shark of Jurassic age have been reported for the first time from Jaisalmer

- Represent a new species named by the research team as *Strophodusjaisalmerensis*.
- The genus *Strophodus* has been identified for the first time from the Indian subcontinent and is only the third such record from Asia, the other two being from Japan and Thailand.
- This discovery marks an important milestone in the study of Jurassic vertebrate fossils in the Jaisalmer region of Rajasthan, and it opens a new window for further research in the domain of vertebrate fossils.
- Hybodonts, an extinct group of sharks, was a dominant group of fishes in both marine and fluvial environments during the Triassic and early Jurassic time.
- Started to decline in marine environments from the Middle Jurassic onwards until they formed a relatively minor component of open-marine shark assemblages.
- Hybodonts finally became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous time 65 million years ago.



9. OSTEOBRAMA BELANGERI

Manipur's state fish introduced in cage culture to enhance production and conservation. Around 500 to 2,500 Pengba fingerlings were released in each of the 10 cages in the Takmu water body at Sendra in Manipur's Bishnupur district of Manipur

- *Osteobrama belangeri* (Pengba/Belengee) is a species of ray-finned fish in the genus *Osteobrama* it was found in the Indian state of Manipur, but has been extirpated there and is found only in aquaculture, and in Myanmar.
- It is used as a food fish, from fish farms in Manipur and wild caught in Myanmar.

- The extirpation of this species from Manipur was caused by dam building, habitat degradation and the introduction of alien species which caused the populations to fragment
- It is the state fish of Manipur
- IUCN Status:- Near Threatened



10. BOVANY BARB

In the latest edition of the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species, the Bovany Barb has been listed as 'possibly extinct',

- *Barbodes bovanicus*, the Bowany barb, is a species of cyprinid fish native to the Cauvery River system in India where it is an inhabitant of reservoirs.
- This species can reach a length of 36 centimetres

11. ADI CASCADE FROG

A team of researchers from Delhi University (DU) have discovered a new species of cascade frog in Arunachal Pradesh. They have named the frog species as "Adi Cascade Frog (*Amolops Adicola*)"

- Adi Cascade Frog is a predominantly brown colour frog with a size ranging roughly between 4 cm to 7 cm.
- The frog was discovered on the Adi hills in Arunachal Pradesh.



12. DHOLE OR ASIATIC WILD DOG

A recent study has identified some priority talukas/tehsils where habitats can be consolidated to enhance population connectivity for the dhole or Asiatic Wild Dog (*Cuon alpinus*).

- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II (Absolute protection – offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.)
- IUCN status: Endangered
- The dhole is a canid native to Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- India perhaps supports the largest number of dholes, with key populations found in three landscapes — Western Ghats, Central India and Northeast India.



13. BENGAL FLORICAN

Environmentalists have recently written to the Assam government on the urgent need to prevent land-use changes at Kokilabari Seed Farm in the state to protect Bengal floricans and other species.

- The Bengal florican, also called Bengal bustard, is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- Occurs from Uttar Pradesh (India) through the Terai of Nepal to Assam (where it is called ulu mora) and Arunachal Pradesh in India, and historically to Bangladesh.

Conservation status

- IUCN Red List Status: Critically Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972: Schedule I



14. FISHING CATS

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII-Dehradun) Conservation Biologists will begin collaring ten Fishing Cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) in Andhra Pradesh.

- About twice the size of a typical house cat, the fishing cat is a feline with a powerful build and stocky legs.
- It is an adept swimmer and enters water frequently to prey on fish as its name suggests.

Conservation status

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix II
- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I



15. KAISER -I -HIND

Arunachal Pradesh has approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly.

- Its scientific name is *Teinopalpus imperialis*
- It flies high in the canopy of broad leaved temperate evergreen forests.
- This butterfly with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in (West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim and Manipur) along the Eastern Himalayas.
- Its presence indicates the existence of a good forest ecosystem and protection.
- The butterfly also flutters in Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and southern China.

Protection Status:

- IUCN: Near Threatened
- CITES: Appendix II
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II



16. NORTHERN RIVER TERRAPIN

Recently, forest officials installed GPS transmitters on the northern river terrapin in the Indian Sunderbans.

- The northern river terrapin (*Batagur baska*) is a species of riverine turtle native to Southeast Asia.
- It is one of Asia's largest freshwater and brackwater turtles, reaching a carapace length of up to 60 cm and a maximum weight of 18 kg. Its carapace is moderately depressed.
- The species is currently found in Bangladesh and India (in the Sunderbans), Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia.
- It is classified Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List and considered extinct in much of its former range, principally due to exploitation as a food item (including egg harvesting).



17. HIMALAYAN GRIFFONS

Recently Himalayan Griffons died of suspected poisoning in Assam.

- The Himalayan Griffon Vulture, *Gyps himalayensis*, is an Old World vulture in the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, kites, buzzards and hawks.
- IUCN Status: Near Threatened (NT)
- The Himalayan vulture mostly lives in the Himalayas on the Tibetan plateau (India, Nepal and Bhutan, central China and Mongolia).
- It is also found in the Central Asian mountains (from Kazakhstan and Afghanistan in the west to western China and Mongolia in the east).
- Occasionally it migrates to northern India but migration usually only occurs altitudinally.



18. PYGMY HOGS

Eight pygmy hogs released in Manas National Park, Assam.

- They are the world's rarest and smallest wild pigs.
- The pygmy hog is native to dense alluvial grasslands in the southern foothills of the Himalayas.
- Endemic to India, they are restricted to very few locations around Manas National Park in northwestern Assam.
- Currently listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- The pygmy hog is designated as a Schedule I species in India under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



19. BENGAL MONITOR

- The Bengal monitor or common Indian monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*) is a large lizard that is mainly terrestrial.
- The monitors are carnivorous and non-poisonous.
- The monitor lizard is protected under Schedule I of WPA but is regularly killed for its meat, blood and oil.
- The species is listed under the 'Least Concern' category on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.



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20. HIMALAYAN YAKS

The National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) at Dirang in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring their livestock.

- Yaks are currently considered to be Vulnerable by the IUCN.
- Yak population in India is found in Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttarakhand.



21. ANIMALAI FLYING FROG

- Scientific name: *Racophorus pseudomalabaricus*.
- Other names: false Malabar gliding frog and false Malabar tree frog.
- It is a critically endangered frog species.
- Endemic to the southern part of the Western Ghats, the numbers of these frogs have declined rapidly due to the loss of habitat.
- This species is known from at least two protected areas, Indira Gandhi National Park and Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.



22. SEA CUCUMBER

- Sea cucumber in India is treated as an endangered species listed under schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- They are marine invertebrates that live on the seafloor found generally in tropical regions. They're named for their unusual oblong shape that resembles a fat cucumber.
- Sea cucumbers are in high demand in China and Southeast Asia. It is primarily smuggled from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka in fishing vessels from Ramanathapuram and Tuticorin districts.



23. HUMBOLDT PENGUINS

Last week, Mumbai's Byculla Zoo announced the addition of two new Humboldt penguin chicks this year. The two join seven adult Humboldt penguins at Byculla Zoo.

- Humboldt penguins are a medium-sized species among at least 17 species.
- Humboldt penguins are endemic to the Pacific coasts of Chile and Peru.
- They are so named because their habitat is located near the Humboldt Current, a large oceanic upwelling characterised by cold waters.
- They are classified as vulnerable by the IUCN Red List.



24. MANDA BUFFALO

The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) has recognised the Manda buffalo as the 19th unique breed of buffaloes found in India.

- It is found in the Eastern Ghats and plateau of Koraput region of Odisha.
- The Manda are resistant to parasitic infections, less prone to diseases and can thrive on modest resources.



25. GANGES RIVER DOLPHINS

The Jal Shakti Ministry has released a guide for the safe rescue and release of stranded Ganges river dolphins.

- The Ganges river dolphin is the national aquatic animal of India.
- It is listed as 'endangered' under the IUCN Red List Assessments, Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972), Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- The Ganges river dolphin can only live in freshwater and is essentially blind.



26. INDUS RIVER DOLPHINS

Punjab to conserve Indus river dolphins: Punjab's wildlife preservation wing has proposed to protect Indus dolphins and their natural habitat.

- The Indus river dolphin is classified as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The Indus river dolphin was declared the State aquatic animal of Punjab in 2019

- They are found in Pakistan. In 2007, a remnant but viable population of Indus dolphins was discovered in Punjab's Harike wildlife sanctuary and in the lower Beas river.



27. NILGAIS

The Bihar government has announced that it will not cull the Blue Bull, locally

known as the nilgai or ghurparas, anymore. It will, instead, sterilise them to control their increasing population in the state.

- The nilgai is the largest Asian antelope and is ubiquitous across the northern Indian subcontinent.
- The nilgai is the sole member of the genus *Boselaphus* and placed in the family Bovidae.
- It occurs in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Significant numbers occur in the Terai lowlands in the foothills of the Himalayas.
- It is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent.
- IUCN status: Least Concern.



28. OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES

Researchers of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) are carrying out tagging of the Olive Ridleys at three mass nesting sites — Gahirmatha, Devi River mouth and Rushikulya.

- The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- They inhabit warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- These turtles, along with their cousin the Kemps ridley turtle, are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- Rushikulya rookery coast in the Ganjam district of Odisha, Gahirmatha beach and the mouth of the Debi River, are the major nesting sites in Odisha.
- IUCN status: Vulnerable.
- Every year, the Indian Coast Guard's "Operation Olivia", initiated in the early 1980s, helps protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the Odisha coast for breeding and nesting from November to December.



29. ALBINO INDIAN FLAPSHELL TURTLE

A rare species of Albino Indian Flapshell turtle was recently sighted by Mountaineers in Sirnapalli forest in Telangana's Nizamabad.

- The Indian flapshell turtle is commonly found in South Asian countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

- The rare yellow color of the turtle may be due to the lack of a pigment called tyrosine present in high amounts in reptiles. A genetic mutation or possible congenital disorder is likely responsible for the lack of tyrosine.

Conservation Status:

- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable.
- CITES: Appendix II.
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I.



30. INDIAN STAR TORTOISE

Found across the Indian sub-continent, more specifically, in the Central and Southern parts of India, in West Pakistan and in Sri Lanka.

- Protected under Schedule IV of Wild Life Protection Act 1972.
- Convention on International Trade in Species (CITES): Appendix I
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable



31. PANGOLIN

The Odisha Forest department has stressed the need for stricter monitoring of social media platforms to check pangolin poaching and trading.

- Pangolin is the only scaly mammal on the planet.
- According to CITES, it is also the most illegally traded vertebrate within its class (Mammalia).
- Of the eight species of pangolin worldwide, two are found in India. They are Chinese pangolin, mostly found in northeast India and Indian pangolin.
- Chinese pangolin has been listed as “critically endangered”.
- Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) has been listed as “endangered”.
- It is also a Schedule I category protected animal, under the Wildlife Protection Act (1972)



32. GIANT LEATHERBACK TURTLE

Proposals for tourism and port development in the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) Islands have conservationists worried over the fate of some of the most important nesting populations of the Giant Leatherback turtle in this part of the Indian Ocean.

- The largest of the seven species of sea turtles on the planet and also the most long-ranging, Leatherbacks are found in all oceans except the Arctic and the Antarctic.
- Within the Indian Ocean, they nest only in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- They are also listed in Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



33. MANDARIN DUCK

- First spotted in Maguri-Motapung beel in Assam.
- The migratory duck breeds in Russia, Korea, Japan and northeastern parts of China. It now has established populations in Western Europe and America too.



34. WHALE SHARK

- The whale shark is the largest living species of fish and is endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- It is protected under the Wildlife Protection Act.
- Whale sharks are found in all the tropical oceans of the world. Whale sharks are found along the coast of India.



35. RED SANDERS

- Red sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) is known for its rich hue and therapeutic properties.
- The tree is endemic to several districts in Andhra Pradesh and some parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- The species was listed in Appendix II of CITES in 1995, and subsequently export of red sanders was prohibited in 2004.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has put it under the category of near threatened from earlier endangered species in the Red List.



36. HIMALAYAN SEROW

- It is a Himalayan mammal, somewhere between a goat and an antelope.
- It has been confirmed as the newest creature to be spotted in Assam.
- Categorized as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- It is listed under Schedule I of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which provides absolute protection.



37. BLACKBUCKS

Odisha's blackbuck population has doubled in the last six years, according to figures from the latest population census released recently by the chief conservator of forest (wildlife).

- Blackbucks are found only in the Ganjam district in the southern part of the state.
- Protection status: The blackbuck is a Schedule-1 animal according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 1992) and is considered as 'Vulnerable' according to the Red Data Book.
- State animal of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana & Punjab.

Protected Areas:

1. Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary — Gujarat.
2. Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary.
3. Nilgiri biosphere reserve.
4. Corbett national park.



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