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# Topic wise content



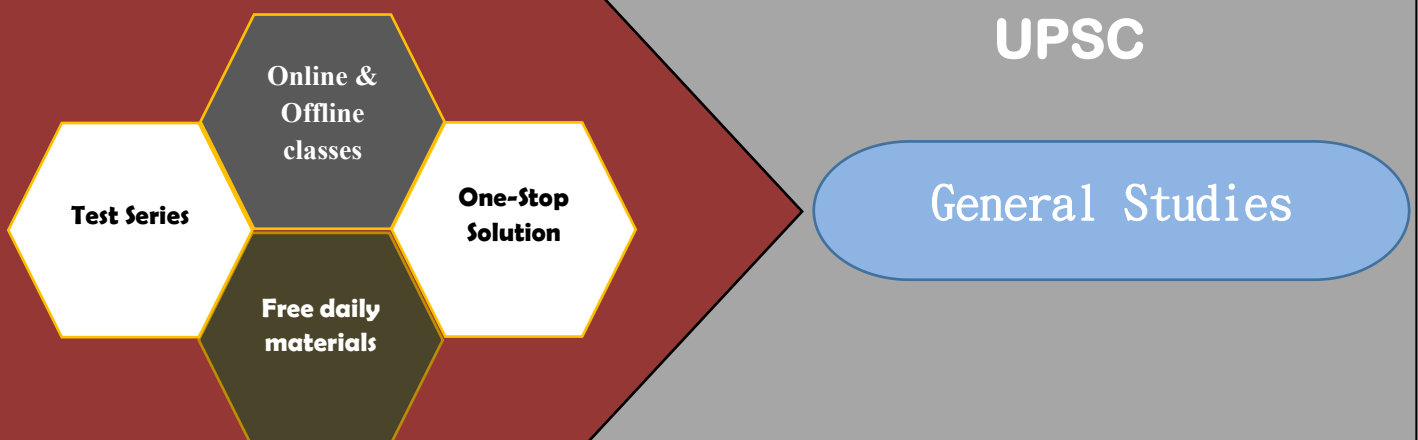
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## The International Union for Conservation of Nature

Notes for civil services preparation



## The International Union for Conservation of Nature

- IUCN is a membership union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations.
- Created in **1948**, it is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
- It is headquartered in Switzerland.
- The **IUCN Red List** of Threatened Species, is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.
- It uses a set of quantitative criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of species. These criteria are relevant to most species and all regions of the world.
- The IUCN Red List Categories define the extinction risk of species **Nine categories** extend from NE (*Not Evaluated*) to EX (*Extinct*). Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) species are considered to be threatened with extinction.
- It is recognized as the most authoritative guide to the status of biological diversity.
- It is also a key indicator for the **SDGs** and Aichi Targets.
- The latest update to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**) **Red List** of Threatened Species shows that more and more species assessed are being threatened with extinction.
- The list assessed 1,05,732 species - the **largest such assessment** of species, out of which 28,338 species are threatened with extinction.
- The updated list brings out an alarming rate of decline of freshwater and deep sea species. For example, over 50 % of Japan's endemic freshwater fishes are under the threat of extinction.
- Wedge fishes and giant guitar fishes, collectively known as Rhino Rays because of their elongated snouts, have been listed as the 'most imperiled marine fish families in the world'.
- The main drivers of this decline are the loss of free flowing rivers and increasing agricultural and urban pollution.
- Close to 50% of the species assessed by IUCN have been put under the 'Least Concern' category. It means the rest 50% are under various degrees of decline.
- Of the total assessed, 873 are already extinct while 6,127 are critically endangered.
- This Red List update **confirms the findings** of the **IPBES Global Biodiversity**
- The list clearly indicates that humans are over exploiting wildlife.
- According to the **global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020)'s Target 12**, the extinction of known threatened species has to be 'prevented' by 2020. The target also includes an improvement in the conservation status of species.