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# Topic Wise Content



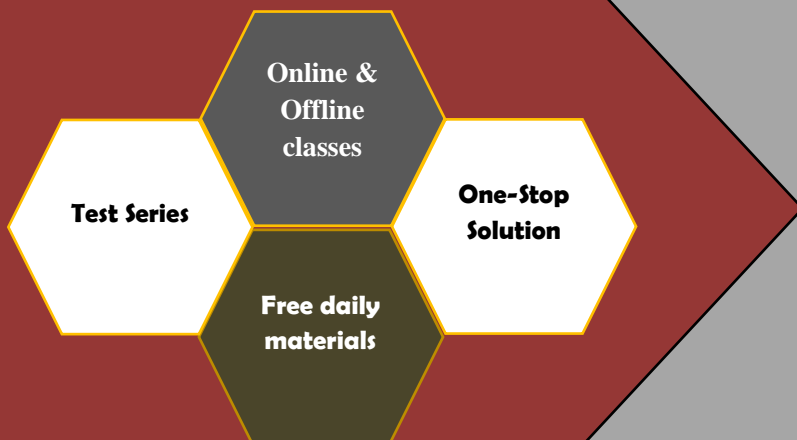
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## Indian Desert Cat

Notes for civil services preparation



UPSC

General Studies

## Indian Desert Cat

Recently, an **Indian Desert Cat** has been spotted for the first time in **Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR)**.

- The Indian Desert Cat is also known as the **Asiatic Wildcat or the Asian Steppe Wildcat**.

### Key Points

- **Scientific Name:** *Felis silvestris ornata*

#### □ About:

- It is usually a creature of the **Thar desert in Rajasthan, and inhabits scrub desert areas**.
- The cat occurs in **arid and semi-arid zones of western India** which includes Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra up to Pune and Nagpur.
- This cat is found in deserts **and can survive without water**.
- The **toes of the species have cushion-like hair** which help it balance the fluctuating desert temperatures.

#### □ Habitat:

- It can be found mostly in **scrub deserts, up to 2,000-3,000 m elevation, mountainous areas with sufficient vegetation, as well as temperate forests**.
- The Asiatic wildcat usually **occurs close to water sources but can also live in low-water areas**. It does not seem to avoid cultivated areas and human settlements.
  - It avoids vast deserts, dense forests and deep snow.

#### □ Threats:

- It possesses beautiful soft fur, hence, most sought after in the **international fur trade**.
- **Hybridisation** with domestic cats can lead to **the loss of genetic information and is thought to be one of the main threats**. Hybridisation was reported from Pakistan and Central Asia and is most likely also a problem in India.
- Another important threat is from **poaching related to conflict with humans**.
- **Habitat destruction** and reduced habitat quality remain important issues. The Asiatic wildcat is under heavy pressure due to **land use changes**.
- **Rodenticides** and other chemicals may also threaten it.

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#### □ Protection Status:

- **IUCN Red List: Least Concern**
- **CITES: Appendix-II**
- **Wildlife protection Act's: Schedule-I.**

