GEOGRAPHY 14 October 2026

Sloth Bear Discovery and Conservation Status in India

Researchers studying scat samples in Telangana's Amrabad Tiger Reserve found evidence of sloth bears hunting shield-tailed snakes during the monsoon.

The sloth bear (Melursus ursinus) is a shaggy-coated, nocturnal mammal native to the Indian subcontinent, uniquely adapted to feed on ants and termites.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- Researchers analyzing over **100** scat samples in the **Amrabad Tiger Reserve** discovered the remains of shield-tailed snakes, marking a potential first record of such predation.
- Sloth bears possess a long, flexible snout and mobile lips designed to suck up ants and termites efficiently.
- These mostly **nocturnal mammal**s inhabit rugged terrains, rocky hillocks, dry grasslands, scrublands, and moist tropical forests.
- A **2006 survey** estimated India's sloth bear population to be between 6,000 and 11,000 individuals, with roughly half residing outside protected areas.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List classifies the sloth bear as **vulnerable**.
- In India, sloth bears receive the highest legal protection under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

The **Wildlife (Protection) Act** was enacted in **1972**, providing a legal framework for the protection of wild animals, birds, and plants in India.

Project Tiger was launched in **April 1973** as a centrally sponsored scheme to ensure a viable population of Bengal tigers in their natural habitats.

Article 48A of the Constitution of India directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.

The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act** of **1976** transferred 'Forests' and 'Protection of Wild Animals and Birds' from the State List to the Concurrent List.

The **IUCN Red List** categorizes species into nine groups based on extinction risk, ranging from Least Concern to Extinct.

Amrabad Tiger Reserve is located in the Nallamala Hills of **Telangana** and is part of the erstwhile Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve.

REVISION FLASHCARD

Sloth bears are classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List and receive top legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Syllabus Relevance: Highly relevant for TNPSC Group 1 and Group 2 questions on Indian wildlife acts, IUCN categories, and biodiversity conservation.

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