

Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

9th Feb, 2019


PROJECT LION

Head	Year I	Year II	Year III
Translocation to Barda	54.21	24.21	9.21
Monitoring of Lion	2.24	1.66	0.58
MSTRIPES Patrolling	1.48	0.32	0.12
Disease Profiling	1.22	1.15	1.15
Other expenses	0.35	0.34	0.34

* Rs in crores

SALIENT FEATURES

- **Rs 99 crore** project approved for lion conservation
- **NTCA, Gujarat forest department and WII** to implement it
- **Barda** to be developed as **second home for lions** within Gujarat
- **40-odd lions** will be **radio collared**
- **Maldharis** from Barda to be **relocated** and will receive **compensation of Rs 15 lakh each**
- **Vaccination** of **feral dogs and cattle**
- **Samples** from **feral dogs and cattle** to be **regularly collected** to test for **CDV, rabies** and other **diseases**
- **Samples** from **other wild animals** will also be collected to monitor for diseases



What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: About Asiatic Lion, the proposed lion introduction project in MP and Asiatic lion conservation project.

Context: The Centre and the Gujarat government have announced a Rs. 97.85 crore **Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**.

Key features of the project:

- **Key aspects of the conservation project include** undertaking “habitat improvement” measures, making more sources of water available, creating a wildlife crime cell, and a task force for the Greater Gir region. ‘Greater Gir’ that includes, other than the existing Gir National Park, sanctuaries in Girnar, Pania and Mitiyala.
- It would also **involve having in place a GPS-based tracking system**, which would look at surveillance tracking, animal and vehicle tracking. There would also be an automated sensor grid that would have magnetic sensors, movement sensors and infra-red heat sensors.
- **A key outcome of the project is to have a dedicated veterinary institute, lion ambulances and back-up stocks of vaccines** that may be required.

Relocation of lions:

- The **Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh was identified to be the most suitable for reintroducing the species**, according to a Supreme Court-appointed technical expert committee, but there has been no progress on the proposal.
- There is a committee of experts from both States examining the suitability of Madhya Pradesh as a potential lion reserve.
- **The SC in April 2013 had ordered the translocation of some lions from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh within six months**, but this hasn’t happened. This was ordered after several recommendations by expert groups, including the Wildlife Institute of India.
- It emphasised that the long-term survival of the lion as a species was best served if they could be present outside Gujarat, too, so that they are protected against, say, a forest fire, a disease, or calamities.

Facts for Prelims:

- Asiatic Lions are listed as ‘Endangered’ under the IUCN Red List.
- Its population is restricted to the state of Gujarat in India.
- With serious conservation efforts of the State and the Union Government, the population of Asiatic lions have increased to over 500 which used to be around 50 by late 1890s.

- As per the 2015 census, there were a total of 523 Asiatic Lions in Gir Protected Area Network.

To be looked in UPSC Paper 3 Topic:

1. Conservation related issues.