

PLACS IN NEWS

Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary

- **Establishment:** The sanctuary was established in **1976**, specifically for the conservation of the **Indian Grey Wolf** population.
- **Location:** It lies **within the Palamau Tiger Reserve**, situated in the state of **Jharkhand**.
- **River System:** The **Burha River** flows through the sanctuary, supporting its ecological diversity.
- **Conservation Objective:** It is **India's only sanctuary dedicated exclusively** to the protection of **Indian Grey Wolves**.

About the Indian Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*)

- **Scientific Classification:** Subspecies of the grey wolf, ***Canis lupus pallipes***.
- **Geographical Range:** Found across **Southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent**, including countries such as **India and Pakistan**.
- **Preferred Habitat:** Thrives in **dry deciduous Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests**, open grasslands, and semi-arid scrublands.

Other Wolf Species Found in India

- **Tibetan Wolf (*Canis lupus chanco*):**
 - Found in the **trans-Himalayan and cold desert regions**, such as **Ladakh** and **northern Himachal Pradesh**.
- **Himalayan Wolf (*Canis lupus himalayensis*):**
 - Considered a **genetically distinct and ancient lineage**, possibly **evolving before other grey wolf subspecies**.
 - Inhabits **high-altitude ecosystems** of **Spiti Valley, Ladakh**, and **western Tibet**.
 - Its taxonomic status is **debated**, with some researchers advocating for it as a separate species.



Unique Ecological and Cultural Aspects

- **Denning Behaviour:**
 - Indian Grey Wolves choose **den sites away from human settlements**, usually on **higher slopes with dense shrubbery**.
- **Link with Sarna Faith:**
 - The **Sarna Dharma** is a tribal religious practice observed in Jharkhand.
 - During **November to February**, Sarna followers **refrain from entering Sal forests**, coinciding with the **wolf denning season**, providing a **natural buffer against human interference**.

- **Pack Behaviour and Hunting:**
 - Wolves in Mahuadanr form **smaller and more discreet packs** than other subspecies.
 - They are **less vocal** and exhibit **nocturnal hunting patterns**, primarily active during **dusk and dawn**.

Ecological Role of Indian Grey Wolves

- Act as **top carnivores** in their ecosystems, playing a **crucial role in controlling herbivore populations**.
- Prevent **overgrazing** and contribute to **maintaining biodiversity** in the forest ecosystem.

Conservation and Legal Protection

| Protection Framework | Status |
|---|--|
| IUCN Red List | Endangered in India (Population: ~3,000–3,100) |
| Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 Schedule I | – highest legal protection |
| CITES | Appendix I – international trade is highly restricted |