



# VIDYA ICS

*We Nurture Dreams...*



# DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

ENGLISH VERSION



**OCT.  
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**PRE+MAINS SPECIAL**

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## **The Living Planet Report 2024: A Call to Action for Biodiversity Conservation**

The Living Planet Report 2024, published biennially by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), raises critical concerns about the alarming state of global biodiversity. Based on data from over 32,000 wildlife populations across 5,200 species, the report reveals a dramatic 73% decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations since 1970. This sharp decline points to widespread human-induced damage to ecosystems and a significant loss of species.

### **Key Findings and Consequences**

#### *1. Biodiversity Crisis:*

The report highlights the severity of the biodiversity crisis, emphasizing how species and ecosystems are interconnected. The decline in wildlife populations is not just an environmental issue but poses serious risks to ecosystem health, climate stability, and human livelihoods.

#### *2. Habitat Loss and Degradation:*

Deforestation, land-use changes, and pollution are the primary causes of habitat destruction, driving wildlife population decline. The report stresses the urgency of implementing strong conservation strategies to protect and restore critical habitats.

#### *3. Climate Change:*

Climate change is worsening the impacts of habitat loss, causing shifts in species distributions and increasing the likelihood of extinctions. The report urges for bold climate action to reduce the detrimental effects of climate change on biodiversity.

#### *4. Sustainable Consumption and Production:*

The report identifies unsustainable consumption and production practices as key contributors to biodiversity loss. It calls for a transition to sustainable production and consumption models to curb further environmental degradation.

### **Insights from the Indian Context**

#### *1. Tiger Conservation:*

India has made notable progress in tiger conservation, yet challenges such as habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict persist. The report stresses the need for continued efforts to safeguard tiger habitats and mitigate threats to their survival.

#### *2. Forest Cover:*

India has seen a rise in forest cover in recent years, but deforestation and forest degradation continue to pose major challenges. The report highlights the importance of adopting effective forest management practices to ensure long-term biodiversity protection.

#### *3. Protected Areas:*

India's network of protected areas is crucial for biodiversity conservation. The report underscores the importance of expanding and strengthening these areas to protect vulnerable species and ecosystems.



## Conclusion

The Living Planet Report 2024 serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for global collective action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. By addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss and implementing robust conservation measures, we can pave the way for a more sustainable future for both humanity and the planet's wildlife.

## Footrot Disease: An Increasing Threat to Livestock Health

Footrot is a highly contagious bacterial disease that primarily affects the feet of ruminants, such as sheep and cattle. The disease is caused by a combination of bacteria, most notably *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Bacteroides nodosus*. Footrot can lead to severe lameness, weight loss, and a notable decline in livestock productivity.

### Causes and Symptoms

- Bacterial Transmission:**  
Footrot spreads through direct contact between infected animals or from exposure to contaminated pastures. Bacteria enter the feet via cracks or wounds in the skin.
- Favorable Conditions:**  
Wet, muddy environments and poor hoof hygiene create ideal conditions for the bacteria to thrive and multiply.
- Symptoms:**  
Early signs of the disease include lameness, swelling in the affected foot, and a foul odor. In more advanced stages, the foot becomes severely damaged, resulting in significant pain and walking difficulties.

### Impact on Livestock

- Productivity Loss:**  
Footrot drastically reduces livestock productivity. Infected animals often suffer from weight loss, a drop in milk production, and reproductive challenges.
- Animal Welfare:**  
The disease causes considerable pain, raising serious animal welfare concerns.
- Economic Consequences:**  
The disease can inflict substantial financial losses on farmers due to decreased productivity, the cost of treatments, and potential culling of infected animals.

### Prevention and Control Strategies

- Maintaining Hygiene:**  
Good hygiene practices in livestock housing and pastures are crucial to prevent the spread of footrot. Regular cleaning and disinfection of animal pens and equipment are key to reducing infection risks.



2. **Foot Trimming:**  
Frequent foot trimming helps eliminate dead or damaged tissue, reducing the potential entry points for bacterial infection.
3. **Vaccination:**  
Vaccines are available to protect animals susceptible to footrot, and regular use can aid in disease prevention.
4. **Treatment:**  
Early detection is vital for effective treatment, which often involves the use of antibiotics and foot baths. Prompt action limits the disease's spread and minimizes economic losses.

## Insights from India

1. **Impact on the Sheep Industry:**  
Footrot poses a significant threat to India's sheep farming sector, leading to reduced productivity and financial strain.
2. **Government Initiatives:**  
The Indian government has introduced several measures to combat footrot, including providing farmers with technical assistance, promoting vaccination programs, and enhancing disease surveillance.
3. **Research Efforts:**  
Indian research institutions are working on understanding footrot better and developing improved prevention and control techniques.

## Conclusion

Footrot is a serious disease that can severely impact livestock production. However, by adopting effective prevention and control measures, farmers can protect their animals, enhance productivity, and reduce economic losses.

## Ardetosaurus viator: A Recent Dinosaur Discovery

Ardetosaurus viator, a newly identified dinosaur species, has generated excitement in paleontology. This unique dinosaur, classified as a sauropod, provides fresh insights into the evolution and diversity of these large herbivores.

### Distinct Features and Importance

#### 1. Bird-like Traits:

One of the most fascinating features of Ardetosaurus viator is its resemblance to birds. Its long neck, small head, and slender build suggest it may have been more agile compared to other sauropods.

#### 2. Herbivorous Diet:

This dinosaur is thought to have been a plant-eater, using its long neck and small head to feed on vegetation at higher levels, such as leaves from trees and shrubs.



### *3. Evolutionary Insights:*

The discovery of *Ardetosaurus viator* offers new perspectives on the evolution of sauropods, indicating greater diversity in their physical traits and behaviors than previously understood.

### *4. Paleoenvironmental Significance:*

The site where *Ardetosaurus viator* was unearthed offers valuable information about the ancient environment in which it lived. Analyzing nearby rock layers and other fossils helps scientists reconstruct the prehistoric ecosystem and conditions that supported its existence.

## **Indian Context and Contributions**

### *1. Dinosaur Discoveries in India:*

India has a rich history of dinosaur discoveries, with several new species being identified in recent years. The finding of *Ardetosaurus viator* adds to our understanding of the country's prehistoric wildlife.

### *2. Geological Formations:*

Notable geological formations in India, such as the Rajmahal Hills and the Lameta Formation, have revealed a wealth of dinosaur fossils, offering key insights into the paleogeography and paleoclimate of ancient India.

### *3. Role of Indian Research Institutions:*

Institutions like the Geological Survey of India and various university departments are pivotal in advancing dinosaur research. These organizations contribute significantly to the study and preservation of India's rich paleontological heritage.

## **Conclusion**

The discovery of *Ardetosaurus viator* marks an important advancement in paleontology, enhancing our understanding of dinosaur diversity and the ancient ecosystems they inhabited. As ongoing research continues to uncover new findings, we can look forward to even greater revelations about the prehistoric world.

## **Red Panda Conservation in India: An Updated Overview**

Red pandas, known for their unique charm, are endangered species native to the Himalayan region, including India. Their distinct appearance and specific habitat needs have made them key symbols of wildlife conservation. This article delves into the current conservation status of red pandas in India and outlines recent government initiatives to protect them.

## **Conservation Status**

- 1. Endangered Species:**  
Red pandas are classified as "Endangered" on the IUCN Red List, highlighting their vulnerability to extinction.
- 2. Habitat Degradation:**  
The primary threat to red pandas comes from habitat destruction due to deforestation, infrastructure development, and human encroachment.



3. Poaching:  
Illegal hunting for their fur and the wildlife trade further endanger red panda populations.

## **Government Initiatives**

1. Red Panda Conservation Programme:  
The Indian government has launched the Red Panda Conservation Programme, focusing on habitat restoration, anti-poaching efforts, and community engagement to preserve red panda populations.
2. Protected Habitats:  
Red pandas inhabit several protected areas across India, such as Singalila National Park, Khangchendzonga National Park, and Namdapha National Park, providing them with critical habitats.
3. Community-Based Conservation:  
Local communities are integral to conservation efforts. By involving residents in habitat restoration, wildlife monitoring, and anti-poaching initiatives, the government has fostered community-led conservation programs.
4. Research and Monitoring:  
Ongoing research and monitoring activities aim to better understand the ecology and behavior of red pandas, which helps in crafting more effective conservation strategies.

## **Recent Conservation Efforts**

1. Habitat Restoration:  
Several habitat restoration initiatives, such as reforestation, forest rehabilitation, and creating wildlife corridors, have been undertaken to improve red panda habitats.
2. Anti-Poaching Enforcement:  
The strengthening of anti-poaching laws and the enhancement of patrolling have played a significant role in curbing illegal poaching.
3. Awareness Campaigns:  
Public awareness programs are educating communities about the importance of red panda conservation and the challenges posed by habitat loss and poaching.

## **Conclusion**

India's conservation efforts for the red panda have yielded encouraging results, but persistent challenges like habitat destruction, poaching, and climate change require sustained action. Through continued collaboration with local communities and international organizations, India can work toward securing the long-term survival of red pandas and preserving their unique ecosystems.

## **Vulture Conservation Initiatives in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**

A recent vulture survey in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala, marks a significant step forward in efforts to conserve these critically endangered birds. The survey recorded 80 vultures across nine locations, highlighting the ongoing efforts to safeguard these vital species.



## **Vultures: Key Players in the Ecosystem**

1. **Ecological Importance:**  
Vultures serve as essential scavengers, playing a critical role in maintaining the ecosystem by cleaning up carcasses and preventing the spread of diseases.
2. **Declining Numbers:**  
Vulture populations have plummeted in recent decades, primarily due to the widespread use of the veterinary drug diclofenac, which is highly toxic to them.
3. **Conservation Initiatives:**  
Various conservation efforts are underway to protect and restore vulture populations, ensuring their survival and ecological function.

## **Importance of the Wayanad Vulture Survey**

1. **Population Insights:**  
The survey provides crucial data on the current population size and distribution of vultures in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
2. **Habitat Evaluation:**  
It also helps in assessing the suitability of the habitat for vultures and in identifying any potential threats to their survival.
3. **Strategic Conservation:**  
The information gathered from this survey is invaluable for planning effective conservation strategies and for tracking the success of ongoing protection efforts.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

1. **Habitat Degradation:**  
Habitat loss and fragmentation remain significant challenges for vulture populations, emphasizing the need for habitat protection and restoration.
2. **Illegal Hunting:**  
Despite protective measures, vultures are still targeted by illegal hunting for their body parts, which continues to threaten their populations.
3. **Community Involvement:**  
Long-term success in vulture conservation requires active engagement of local communities in protecting these birds.
4. **Ongoing Research:**  
Continuous monitoring and research are crucial for understanding vulture population trends and addressing emerging threats effectively.

## **Government Initiatives**

1. **Vulture Safe Zones:**  
The Indian government has established vulture safe zones in various regions to protect these birds from poisoning and other dangers.





2. Diclofenac Ban:  
To prevent vulture deaths, India has banned the veterinary use of diclofenac, a major cause of vulture poisoning.
3. Public Awareness:  
Awareness campaigns have been launched to educate the public about the importance of vulture conservation and the threats facing these birds.

## **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary: A Biodiversity Hotspot**

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is a picturesque and ecologically rich sanctuary located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India. It is renowned for its diverse flora and fauna, making it a popular destination for nature enthusiasts and wildlife researchers.

### **Key Features and Significance**

- **Biogeographic Importance:** The sanctuary is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is considered a global biodiversity hotspot.
- **Diverse Flora:** Wayanad boasts a wide range of vegetation types, including tropical evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests, and grasslands. The sanctuary is home to valuable timber species like teak and rosewood, as well as medicinal plants and orchids.
- **Rich Fauna:** Wayanad is known for its diverse wildlife, including large mammals like elephants, tigers, leopards, and gaur. It also supports a variety of smaller mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. The sanctuary is particularly famous for its birdlife, with over 200 species recorded.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** The sanctuary faces challenges due to human-wildlife conflict, particularly with elephants that often stray into nearby villages.
- **Conservation Efforts:** The Kerala Forest Department has implemented various conservation measures to protect the biodiversity of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. These include anti-poaching activities, habitat restoration, and community engagement programs.

### **Tourist Attractions**

- **Banasura Sagar Dam:** This is the largest earth dam in India and offers scenic views of the surrounding landscape.
- **Neelimala Viewpoint:** This viewpoint provides panoramic views of the Western Ghats and the Banasura Sagar Dam.
- **Thirunelli Temple:** This ancient temple is a popular pilgrimage site and is surrounded by lush greenery.
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- Edakkal Caves: These prehistoric caves are known for their rock carvings, dating back to the Neolithic era.

## **Conclusion**

The recent vulture survey in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary represents a positive step in ongoing conservation efforts. By tackling the challenges and implementing robust conservation strategies, India can ensure the long-term survival of vultures and maintain their essential role in the ecosystem.