

## **5. Proposed alternative to NH 766 tops in Wildlife Roadkills**

**Prelims: Environment- Biodiversity**

**Mains: GS-III- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.**

### **Why in News?**

- ▶▶ A recent study has found that roadkills on the proposed alternative to NH 766 route are one of the highest in the country.

### **Highlights:**

- ▶▶ The eight-month study recorded 2,426 roadkills during the period.
- ▶▶ Studies on roadkills are comparatively low in the country, but available studies show that the roadkill on the proposed alternative highway is high.
- ▶▶ It is suspected that the major reason for the roadkills on the alternative route is the unrestricted vehicle movements, especially during night hours, after the night traffic ban was introduced on NH 766 since 2009.

### **Concerns:**

- ▶▶ Mananthavady-Gonikoppal Mysuru highway passes through the Tholpetty forest range of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ▶▶ The forest range, with an extent of 77 sq. km, is also a major tiger habitat.
- ▶▶ For large animals such as tigers and elephants, roads and railroads hardly pose any physical barrier.
- ▶▶ Most mammals, however, are sensitive to disturbances by humans.
- ▶▶ Smell, noise, and vehicle movement, as well as experiences from human encounters, may repel the animals from approaching the road corridor.

### **Way Forward:**

- ▶▶ Human-wildlife conflict is one of the major threat to Indian wildlife, human activities such as deforestation, Habitat loss, Lack of prey and illegal roads cut through forest are threaten the safety and survival of wildlife in India.
- ▶▶ Many wild animals have been killed due to road accidents and speeding vehicles passing through the wildlife protected area.
- ▶▶ The Centre and the National Highways Authority of India have been repeatedly advised by the National Board for Wildlife, as well as independent researchers, to realign or modify sensitive roads.

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- ▶▶ Speed-breakers have to be set up on the route to curb the menace.
  - ▶▶ Speed limit reductions during these times may decrease mortality rates.
  - ▶▶ A more robust approach would be to realign the roads.

