

1. Asiatic lions

Why in News?

- Recently, The Indian government has re-examining the long-standing plan to translocate Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) from Gir National Park to Kuno National Park.

Highlights

- The Supreme Court ordered the government to translocate Asiatic lions from Gujarat to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. However, the lion translocation remains on paper.
- However, the Centre's 25-year roadmap for Project Lion has no provision for any translocation outside Gujarat.
- Instead, the focus is on assisted natural dispersal across Saurashtra by 2047.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has recently pointed out that the lion population increased by 29% over the past 5 years.
- In view of the recent introduction of cheetahs in Kuno and NTCA is looking for measures to secure the lion's future beyond Gir.
- The Asiatic Lion (also known as the Persian Lion or Indian Lion) is a member of the *Panthera Leo Leo* subspecies that is restricted to India.
- Its previous habitats consisted of West Asia and the Middle East before it became extinct in these regions.
- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- Asiatic lions were once distributed to the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.
- At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.