Emperor Penguin

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Conservation*

Why in News?

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Emperor Penguin as an Endangered Species.

- **Common Name –** Emperor Penguin
- **Scientific Name –** *Aptenodytes forsteri*
- **Genus –** *Aptenodytes*
- **Kingdom –** Animalia
- **Family –** Spheniscidae
- **Habitat –** Native to *Antarctica.*
- They are dependent on *sea ice platforms* for breeding, moulting, and chick rearing.
- **Distribution –** Closely tied to the extent and stability of Antarctic Sea ice.
- **Morphology –** Largest and heaviest of all penguin species.
    - **Height –** up to 120 cm.
    - **Weight –** 20–40 kg.
    - Distinctive **golden-orange streak** on neck and chest.



- **Diet –** Primarily fish, squid, and krill.
- **Sentinel Species –** Emperor penguins are considered sentinel species, their decline signals broader ecological impacts of climate change on Antarctic ecosystems.
- Their survival is directly linked to *greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends.*
- **Conservation Status**
    - **IUCN Red List –** Endangered
    - **CITES –** Appendix I (trade strictly regulated).
- **Threats**
    - Climate change – Shrinking and unstable sea ice.
    - Early break-up of breeding platforms.
    - Decline in food availability (krill moving deeper).

Quick Facts

• **Antarctic Fur Seal –** Also moved to Endangered due to food scarcity (krill decline).
• **Southern Elephant Seal –** Status changed from Least Concern to Vulnerable (pathogen-related decline).

Reference

The Hindu | Emperor Penguins

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