

Iberian lynx

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

Why in news?

Recently, the world's 1st rare white Iberian lynx has been spotted in Spain's Jaén mountains by wildlife photographer Ángel Hidalgo.

- Scientific name Lynx pardinus.
- Family Felidae.
- Iberian lynx is considered as world's most threatened *cat species*.
- **Geographical range** It is endemic to the southern Iberian Peninsula, where it occurs in Spain, Portugal and Southern France.
- Habitat It prefers open grassland mixed with dense shrubs such as strawberry tree, mastic, and juniper, and trees such as holm oak and cork oak.
- **Appearance** It has its sharp eyes, dark ear tufts, heavily spotted tawny coat, long legs and a very short tail with a black tip and a "beard" of fur around its face, and prominent black ear tufts.



- **Size** It is smaller than its relative, the Eurasian lynx, with males typically weighing 7-15.9 kg and females weighing 9.2-10 kg.
- **Prey** It is a *carnivore* that depends heavily on wild rabbits to feed, also eat ducks, young deer.
- Conservation Status
 - **IUCN** Vulnerable
 - **CITES -** Appendix II
- **Threats** Habitat destruction, reduction in prey, and human-induced threats such as poaching, road accidents, and habitat fragmentation and alteration.

Quick Fact

White Iberian lynx

- It is believed to be the world's 1^{st} leucistic Iberian lynx ever recorded.
- Leucism A condition that causes a *lack of pigmentation in the fur*, but not in the eyes, causing the ghostly appearance of the wildcat.
- **Appearance** It is unusually pale, cream-coloured coat, while retaining the typical features of its species sharp eyes, dark ear tufts, and the signature facial ruff.

• White lynx's light fur offers **poor camouflage** in the wild, making survival more challenging.



References

- 1. Times of India | World's 1st rare white Iberian lynx spotted in Spain
- 2. $\underline{IUCN red list \mid Iberian lynx}$

