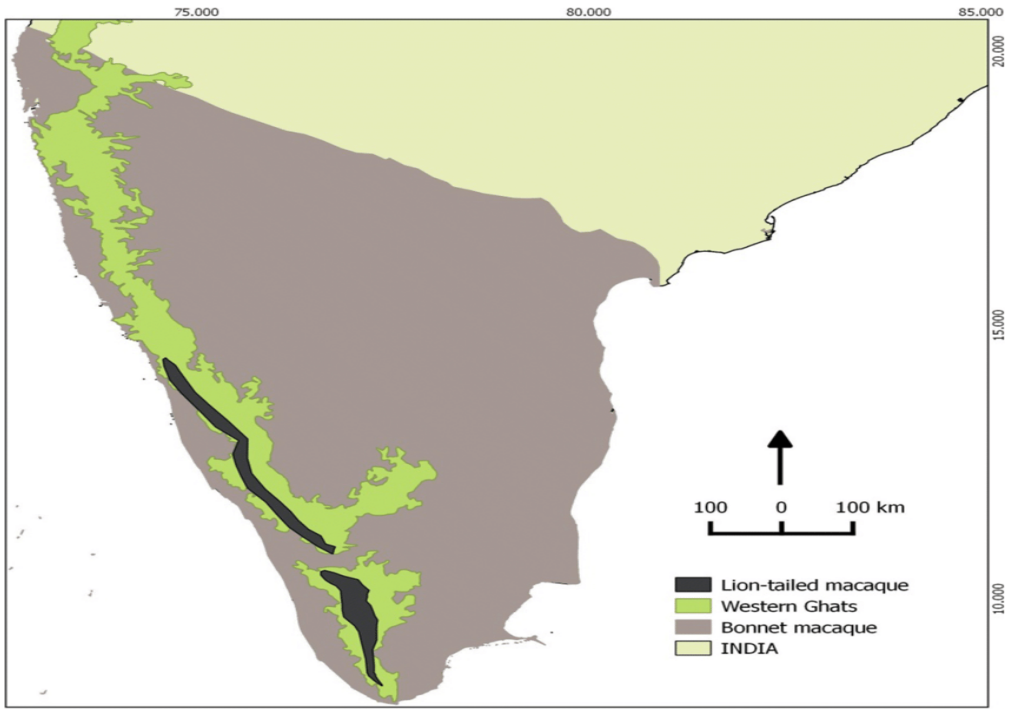
Lion Tailed Macaque

Why in News?

Recently, the researchers from Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) said that human interactions threaten endangered lion-tailed macaque.

- **Lion-Tailed Macaque** – It is one of the smaller macaque species and an *Old-World monkey*.
  - **Scientific name –** Maraca Soleus.
  - **Genus Maraca** – known for its adaptability to human-altered environments.
- **Habitat –** Evergreen, semi-evergreen rainforests & monsoon forests.
- **Distribution –** Found ***only in India*** in the Western Ghats.
- **Distribution in Western Ghats** – Anamalai Hills, Nelliyampathy, Nilambur Ghats, Sholayar, Gavi, Sabarimala, Vallimalai Hills, Valparai and Agumbe.



- **Morphology** – Its body is covered with black fur and tail is long, thin, and naked, with a tuft of black puffy hair at the tip.
- Both males and females have a *grayish lion-like mane of fur* that surrounds the face and the face itself is bare and black.



- **Behavior –** It is *arboreal (*pertaining to trees) and *diurnal*.
- It is a social animal, living in groups of 30-40 animals.
- It is *polygynous*, having more than 1 wife or female mate at a time.
- **Uniqueness** – They are the *only macaques in which males use loud call* to let entering troops know their territorial boundaries.
- **Threats –** With only ***about 4,200 individuals*** remaining, they face severe *risks due to food provisioning*, which leads to malnutrition, and disease.
- The long-term consequences of increased human interaction include
    - Increased exposure to *zoonotic diseases* and diet-related illnesses
    - Behavioural changes like *reduced foraging* in natural habitats and increased reliance on human-provided food
    - Rise in *injuries, roadkill incidents*, and stress-induced mortality

Approximately 25% of the macaque population in habitat areas engage in interactions with humans where hotspots like Valparai, Nelliyampathy, and Sabarimala have seen rising interactions, especially due heightened tourist and pilgrim footfall.

- **Conservation status**
    - **IUCN Status** – Endangered (as of IUCN Redlist 2023)
    - **CITES** – Appendix I.
    - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule I.

References

1. The Hindu| Human Interactions threaten to lion-tailed macaque
2. Animal Diversity Web| Lion-Tailed Macaque



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