

Lion-tailed Macaque

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

A 40-year study in the Anamalai Hills found that lion-tailed macaques increased near human areas due to easy access to food but faced higher mortality risks.

- **Scientific name** - Macaca Silenus.
- **Genus** - Macaca.
- **Habitat** - Tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen rainforests & monsoon forests.
- **Distribution** - **Endemic to the Western Ghats**, being found only in Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- **Key Locations** - Anamalai Hills, Nelliampathy, Silent Valley National Park (largest population), Nilambur, Sholayar, Gavi, Sabarimala, Vallimalai, Valparai, and Agumbe.
- **Appearance** - Black body, silver-white mane (lion-like), long tail with tuft.
- **Reproduction** - Low birth rate, long gestation.
- **Behaviour** - It is **Arboreal (lives in tree canopies) and Diurnal (active during the day)**.
- It is a social animal, living in groups of 30-40 animals.
- It is **polygynous** (Mating system or marriage practice where one male mates with or marries multiple females simultaneously) in nature.
- **Uniqueness** - The only macaque species in which males use loud calls to **mark territorial boundaries**.
- **Diet** - Omnivorous with a fruit-based diet; also feeds on seeds, flowers, insects, and small vertebrates.
- **Threats** -
 - **Fragmentation** - Habitat loss due to plantations, roads, and dams.
 - **Poaching** - Illegal hunting and pet trade.
 - **Conflict** - Human-wildlife interaction in fragmented forests.
- **Conservation status** -
 - **IUCN Status** - Endangered (as of IUCN Redlist 2023)
 - **CITES** - Appendix I.
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** - Schedule I.
- **Ecological significance** - Key **seed disperser** that sustains forest regeneration and ecosystem stability in Western Ghats.



Reference

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