

Madras Hedgehog in Conservation Programme

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in news?

The Tenkasi Forest Division has proposed to expand the 'Golden Jackal Ambassadors' programme to conserve Madras hedgehog, 'mulleli' in Tamil, also.

- **Golden Jackal Ambassadors Scheme** - The programme, launched in 2025 for golden jackal conservation.
- Since this programme has yielded the results - increasing the golden jackal population, this scheme is expanded to conserve Madras hedgehog.
- **Madras Hedgehog in Conservation Programme** - It aims to protect another lesser-known species through public participation and awareness.

Features of the expanded programme

- **Conservation ambassadors** - School and college students, volunteers, local youth and villagers will be trained as conservation ambassadors.
- Educational institutions will nominate "Forest Guard Brothers" and "Forest Guard Sisters" to spread awareness and assist conservation efforts.
- Forest officials will conduct regular training, awareness campaigns and data collection exercises.
- Village Forest Committees will work with local communities and students living near forest areas.
- **Reason for focus** - Major threats include
 - Habitat loss and fragmentation
 - Road mortality
 - Illegal hunting and capture
 - Use in traditional medicine practices
- **Findings from recent survey** - A survey in 38 villages of Tenkasi recorded responses from 867 residents regarding hedgehog sightings and around 53% of respondents reported seeing the species during the monsoon season.

Madras Hedgehog

- **Scientific name** - *Paraechinus nudiventris*.
- It is a small, nocturnal, insect-eating mammal endemic to southern India.
- It also known as the bare-bellied hedgehog or locally called mul-eli (thorn-rat).
- **Habitat** - It inhabits dry scrublands, grasslands and semi-arid regions.

- **Conservation Status**

- **IUCN Red list** – Least Concern.



Reference

[The Hindu | 'Golden Jackal Ambassadors' programme expanded to conserve Madras hedgehog also](#)

