

Nilgiri Tahr

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in news?

Recently, the Tamil Nadu State Forest Department has proposed hydroelectric project could cut through the heart of the Nilgiri Tahr's domain in the upper Nilgiris.

- **Scientific Name** - Nilgiritragus hylocrius
- It is the only mountain ungulate (large mammals with hooves) in southern India amongst the 12 species present in India.
- **State animal** - It is the *state animal of Tamil Nadu*, and also known as Varaiaadu in Tamil.
- **Historic mentions** - It has been richly mentioned in Tamil Sangam literature like Silappathigaaram and Seevagasinthamani.
- **Habitat** - It prefers high-altitude, open montane grasslands and rocky cliffs, and they avoid low-elevation forests.
- They are typically found between 1,200 and 2,600 meters above sea level.
- **Distribution** - It is *endemic* to small stretch of the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, is primarily found in the highlands of southern India.
- **Diet** - Herbivores, primarily graze on grasses, shrubs, and other vegetation found in their high-altitude environment.
- **Largest population** - The Eravikulam National Park in Anamalai hills, Kerala.
- **Synchronized Nilgiri Tahr Survey 2025** - Recorded a total population of 2,668 tahrs across Tamil Nadu and Kerala, with 1,303 in Tamil Nadu and 1,365 in Kerala.
- **October 7** - Nilgiri Tahr Day (Tamil Nadu)
- **Conservation status** -
 - IUCN - Endangered.
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972** - Schedule I.

Quick Fact

Upper Bhavani Pumped Storage Hydroelectricity Project

- **Proposed in** - Upper Bhavani reservoir and Avalanche reservoir in Nilgiris district Tamil Nadu.
- **Undertaken by** - NTECL - a joint venture company between Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)
- **Aim** - To generate electricity to help supply the State's energy grid.

References

1. [The Hindu | Hydroelectric project in Nilgiri Tahr habitat](#)
2. [WWF | Nilgiri Tahr](#)
3. [TN Forest Department | Nilgiri Tahr](#)

