Ocelot

Why in News?

Recently, fewer than 100 ocelots in the United States are feline species which are in the face of extinction.

> *A **feline** is a member of the cat family Felidae, which includes lions, tigers, cheetahs, leopards, pumas, and lynxes.*

- **Ocelot** – It is a ***medium-sized wildcat***, which is twice the size of the average house cat.
- **Scientific Name** – Leopardus Pardalis.
- **Habitat** – Tropical and subtropical rainforests, mangrove swamps, savannas, semi-arid thorn scrub, brushlands, tree branches, or inside a hollow tree.
- **Distribution** – Found in ***Mexico, Central America and Northern Argentina in South America.***
- **Morphology** – It has *beautiful fur coats* covered with a pattern of rosettes, stripes & spots, and fur is golden with black or dark brown doughnut-shaped spots that are tan in the middle.
- Eyes have a layer that reflects light, the neck and belly are white, rounded ears, and a short tail ringed with black or black bars.



- **Sexual dimorphism –** Male is slightly lighter and longer than female.
- **Behaviour** – It is a typically *solitary and nocturnal cat*.
- It is good swimmer, climber & jumper.
- They communicate with each other using body language, scent marking, and vocalizations.
- **Diet** – Feed on rabbits, rodents, iguanas, fish, frogs, crabs, snakes, lizards, baby peccaries, young deer, monkeys or birds.

- **Threats:**
  - Hunted for their fur or skins.
  - Human encroachment, large cities being built and roadways.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN** – Least Concern.
  - **CITES** – Appendix I.(Species that are the most endangered)

Ocelot subspecies, known as the Texas ocelot (Leopardus pardalis albescens), is endangered.

References

1. The Hindu| Decrease in Ocelots Population in the US
2. National Geographic| Ocelot
3. SDZWA| Ocelot

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