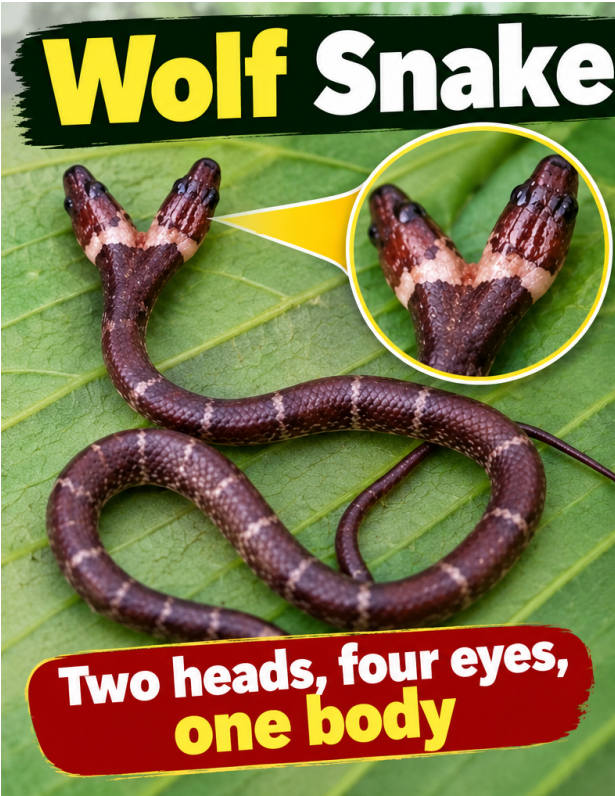


Two-Headed Wolf Snake in Gujarat

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

A rare two-headed wolf snake hatchling was discovered in Dhanpur taluka, Dahod district, Gujarat.



SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT	
 Snake	Wolf snake
 Nature	Non-venomous
 Found in	Dahod district, Gujarat
 Location	Dhanpur taluka / Dhanpur range
 Age	Hatchling/newly born; estimated around 6 months
 Length	~5–6 inches
 Unusual feature	Two heads, four eyes, one body
 Conservation group	Prakruti Mitra Mandal
 Significance	First reported two-headed snake case in Gujarat

- The specimen was rescued by **Prakruti Mitra Mandal** and subsequently transferred to **the Forest Department**.
- The case is reportedly the **first such record in Gujarat** and the **fifth reported case in India**.
- The condition is referred to as bicephaly or **dicephaly (dicephalism)**.

Bicephaly

- A rare developmental or congenital **abnormality**.
- This condition occurs when the embryo fails to **completely separate** during development.
- It results in the presence of **two heads on a single body**.

- Other terms:
 - Dicephalism
 - Dicephaly
 - Axial bifurcatio

Causes of Bicephaly

- No single definitive cause of bicephaly has been established.
- Potential contributing factors include developmental and environmental influences.
 - Partial fusion of two embryos
 - Abnormally **high or low incubation temperatures**
 - Oxygen deficiency (**anoxia**) during development
 - Exposure to radiation
 - Toxic effects resulting from prolonged retention in the **oviduct**
 - Regeneration following injury

Consequences

- These developmental abnormalities may result in difficulties with the following functions:
 - Locomotion
 - Prey capture
 - Ingestion of food
 - Motor coordination
 - Evasion of predators
- However, survival remains possible if the **oesophagus and digestive system** develop adequately to permit the passage of food into the digestive tract.

Reference

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