

UNEP Recognises India's Ganges River Dolphin Recovery Programme

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

Recently, the UNEP recognised India's Ganges River Dolphin Recovery Programme as a world restoration flagship.

- The programme was named one of 35 UN World Restoration Flagships for its impact on ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and job creation.
- **Recognised in** - UNEP's report titled "Nature's Comeback - Scaling Ecosystem Restoration for People and Planet."
- **Jointly published by**
 - **UNEP** - United Nations Environment Programme.
 - **FAO** - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
 - **Secretariat of CBD** - Convention on Biological Diversity.

UN World Restoration Flagships

- The initiative recognises large-scale ecosystem restoration projects worldwide.
- It highlights successful restoration efforts that support biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods.
- The report identifies 35 flagship initiatives globally.

India's Ganges River Dolphin Conservation Programme

- **Comprehensive Action Plan (2022-2047)**
 - India has launched a long-term Comprehensive Action Plan for dolphin conservation, spanning 2022 to 2047.
 - It focuses on the recovery and conservation of river dolphins.
- **Significance**
 - It promotes biodiversity conservation and species recovery.
 - It supports the restoration of river ecosystems.
 - The initiative generates green employment opportunities.
 - It improves the ecological health of freshwater habitats.

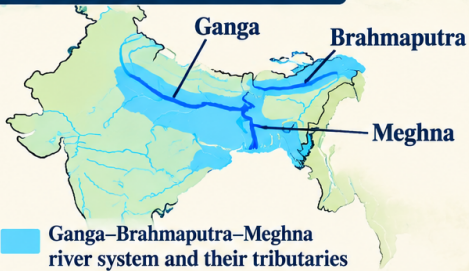
Ganges River Dolphin



	Scientific name	<i>Platanista gangetica.</i>
	Habitat	Freshwater river systems of the Indian subcontinent.
	Distribution	Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna river system and their tributaries.
	Nature	Freshwater cetacean; predominantly blind and uses echolocation to navigate and locate prey.
	Significance	Acts as an indicator of the ecological health of river ecosystems.



Distribution in India



Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna river system and their tributaries

Conservation Status

Classification	Status
 IUCN Red List	Endangered
 Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972	Schedule I
 CITES	Appendix I
 Indian recognition	National Aquatic Animal (2009)

UNEP Report - Major Global Findings

• Global Restoration Progress

- Ecosystem restoration spans 252 million hectares across 149 countries, making it the largest documented global restoration effort.
- Restoration initiatives have created over 1 million green jobs worldwide.

• Ecosystem Restoration Potential

- Restoring 15% of global priority areas could capture and store 30% of historical CO₂ emissions since the Industrial Revolution.
- It could also help prevent 60% of species extinctions worldwide.

• Country-level Progress

- China possesses the largest terrestrial area undergoing restoration, totaling 127.4 million hectares.
- Substantial areas of restoration have also been documented in Mongolia and Kazakhstan.

Regional Distribution of Restoration Areas



Asia accounts for the largest documented restoration area.



Ecosystem-wise Restoration Progress

Ecosystem	Area under restoration	Countries
Terrestrial	Nearly half of the global 2030 target achieved	—
Freshwater	11 million ha	62
Marine and coastal	5.7 million ha	46



Restoration progress in freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems remains limited.



These ecosystems are also experiencing rapid degradation.

Other Species Recovery Initiatives Mentioned in the Report

Species	Region
Mountain Gorilla	East Africa
Jaguar	Brazil's Atlantic Forest
Golden-headed Lion Tamarin	Brazil's Atlantic Forest
Snow Leopard	Kyrgyzstan
Saiga Antelope	Kazakhstan's Altyn Dala
Wild Horses	Kazakhstan's Altyn Dala

Global Frameworks

UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)

- The initiative is led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- The primary objective is to prevent, halt, and reverse ecosystem degradation on a global scale.
- It promotes the restoration of degraded terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)

- This framework was adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15).
- Target 2 aims to ensure that by 2030, at least 30 percent of degraded terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration.

Global Restoration Target

- The global commitment encompasses the restoration of approximately one billion hectares of degraded ecosystems.

Reference

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