

# Nilgiri tahr

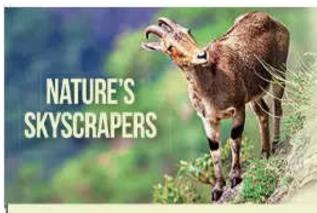
By IASToppers | 2023-09-26 16:20:00



## Nilgiri tahr

Tamil Nadu recently started working on a standardised protocol to count Nilgiri tahr.

• Tamil Nadu has earlier launched Project Nilgiri Tahr for its protection.



• The Nilgiri tahr is south India's only mountain ungulate or hoofed mammal. Tamil Nadu's state animal, it once thrived across the Western Ghats — now endangered, it exists in fragments of its range, threatened by habitat loss and poachers. With stylish curved horns, the reclusive tahr live at 8,000 feet, hiding in cliff faces. While a herd rests, one stays alert — with great eyesight, the tahr can spot danger afar, producing a whistle-like alarm

The beautiful Himalayan monal is Nepal's national bird and Uttarakhand's state bird — but despite its credentials, it is a very shy being. Like other pheasants, the male is gorgeously coloured, females being more sober. Found at 14,000 feet above sea level, the monal inhabit oak, conifer and pine trees — with good looks, they have good sense too, descending in winter to 6,000 feet so their chicks survive while the parents dig snow for shoots

• The marmot lives at 16,000 feet above sea level — creating dens 30 feet deep in the ground, marmots burrow for six months a year. Their toes have concave claws that let them burrow efficiently. This is a social animal, helpful as it lives with relatives, each keeping the other warm. Females often burrow longer with their young — any danger elicits low-pitched alarm calls repeated by watchful marmots



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### About the Nilgiri tahr:

- Nilgiri tahr is southern India's only mountain ungulate (state animal of Tamil Nadu) and one of the few species of mountain Caprinae.
  - 12 mountain ungulate species are present in India.
- It is a congener of the Himalayan tahr, found in Kashmir and Bhutan.
- Endemic to the southern part of the Western Ghats, it is found mainly in Kerala and Tamil Nadu between Nilgiris in the north and Kanyakumari hills in the south of the region.
  - The **Anamalai hills** and the **Nilgiris**, mainly the **Mukurthi National Park**, are home to the **highest** number of Nilgiri tahr.
- Threats: invasive plants such as wattles, pines, and eucalyptus in the grasslands.



### About the census of Nilgiri tahr:

- First time, drones may be used in the census, as the Nilgiri tahr prefers montane grasslands, with steep and rocky terrains at an altitude between 300 and 2,600 metres above sea level.
- Survey of habitats- the Nilgiris hills; Siruvani hills; Anamalais, high ranges and Palani hills;
  Srivillipudur, Theni and Tirunelveli hills; and the Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve and Ashambu hills.
- **Significance**: to understand the **dynamics** of **population density** of the **ungulate spread** across the **different landscapes**, and its range of **habitats**.

#### **Conservation status:**

• IUCN: Endangered

• Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule-I

#### Other key facts:

A component of the Project Nilgiri Tahrs aims to study the possible causes of the <u>lumpy skin</u> <u>disease</u> that has been observed in the animal, and suggest a remedy for it.