

Hornbills

written by iasexam.com | 29/05/2023



Context- A community based conservation initiative that involved the Kadar tribal community has brought the dwindling hornbill population to a viable level in the Western Ghats.

Key highlights:

- The Kadars, an indigenous community in the Vazhachal forest division started the hornbill nest tree monitoring program along with Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation in 2005 to address the declining hornbill population and restore the vanishing habitats.
- The initiative has helped prevent poaching, protected and monitored the species and its nesting trees.

About Hornbills:

- The Hornbills commonly known as the Great Indian hornbill or Great Pied hornbill are found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, they are frugivorous i.e, feed on fruits and small mammals, reptiles and birds.
- Due to their large size and color they have significance in several tribal cultures and ritual. The distinguished feature of the hornbill is their bright yellow and black casque on top of their massive bill.
- Among the hornbills found in India, four South Indian species include the **Great Hornbill-*Buceros bicornis***(The state bird of Kerala an Arunachal pradesh), the **Malabar Pied hornbill, Malabar grey hornbill and Indian gray hornbill** that can be seen in the unique low-elevation riparian forest in the Athirapilly Vazhachal region.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature(IUCN) Red List, **The great hornbill is in the vulnerable category while the Malabar Pied Hornbill is near-**

threatened .

- In India the state of Nagaland annually celebrates the Hornbill festival displaying the rich ,culture and tradition of the ethnic tribes of Nagaland

Major threats:

- The hornbills are extremely sensitive to disturbances ,the hollows of high canopy trees serve as their nests and riparian(areas between land and river/stream) forest habitats with old trees that are necessary for nesting and foraging.
- Shortage of suitable nesting trees and riparian habitats and increased poaching(by tribals for their meat,fat ,feathers and casque as adornments) has led to the threatening of the species.