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Saiga Antelope



Why in News?

- The **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature) **Red List** has **recently reclassified** the **status of the Saiga Antelope** (***Saiga tatarica***) from **Critically Endangered** to **Near Threatened**.
- This significant update **reflects positive conservation efforts** and offers a hopeful outlook for the survival of the Saiga antelope species.



Key Facts about Saiga Antelope

- The Saiga antelope is a large, **nomadic, migratory herbivore** that **lives across the Eurasian Steppe**.
- It's **found in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan**.



The Saiga has **two subspecies**:

1. **Saiga tatarica tatarica** (found in **most of the range**) and
2. **Saiga tatarica mongolica** (found **only in Mongolia**).

They have an **unusual hanging nose**, which makes them look like a camel, although they are goat-sized, and **male saigas have horns**

Typical **habitat consists of flat open areas covered with low-growing vegetation**, allowing animals to run quickly.



Decline in Saiga Population

- The Saiga faced a drastic decline in its population by more than 95% within a decade after 1991.
- The decline was primarily due to poaching for the species' meat and horn. The horn is used in Chinese Traditional Medicine.
- In 2015, a major epidemic killed more than 200,000 animals, which was a blow to the species' promising recovery.



Conservation:

- **Conservation efforts** have led to a positive change in the global Red List **status of the Saiga antelope.**
- **Kazakhstan has shown commendable leadership in species recovery,**
- The **CMS** (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species) of Wild Animals has **facilitated cooperation among governments** for the conservation of the Saiga antelope.
- The **Saiga antelope population has soared to over 1.9 million,** in the 2023 census.
- **IUCN) Red List has recently reclassified the status of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga tatarica) from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened.**





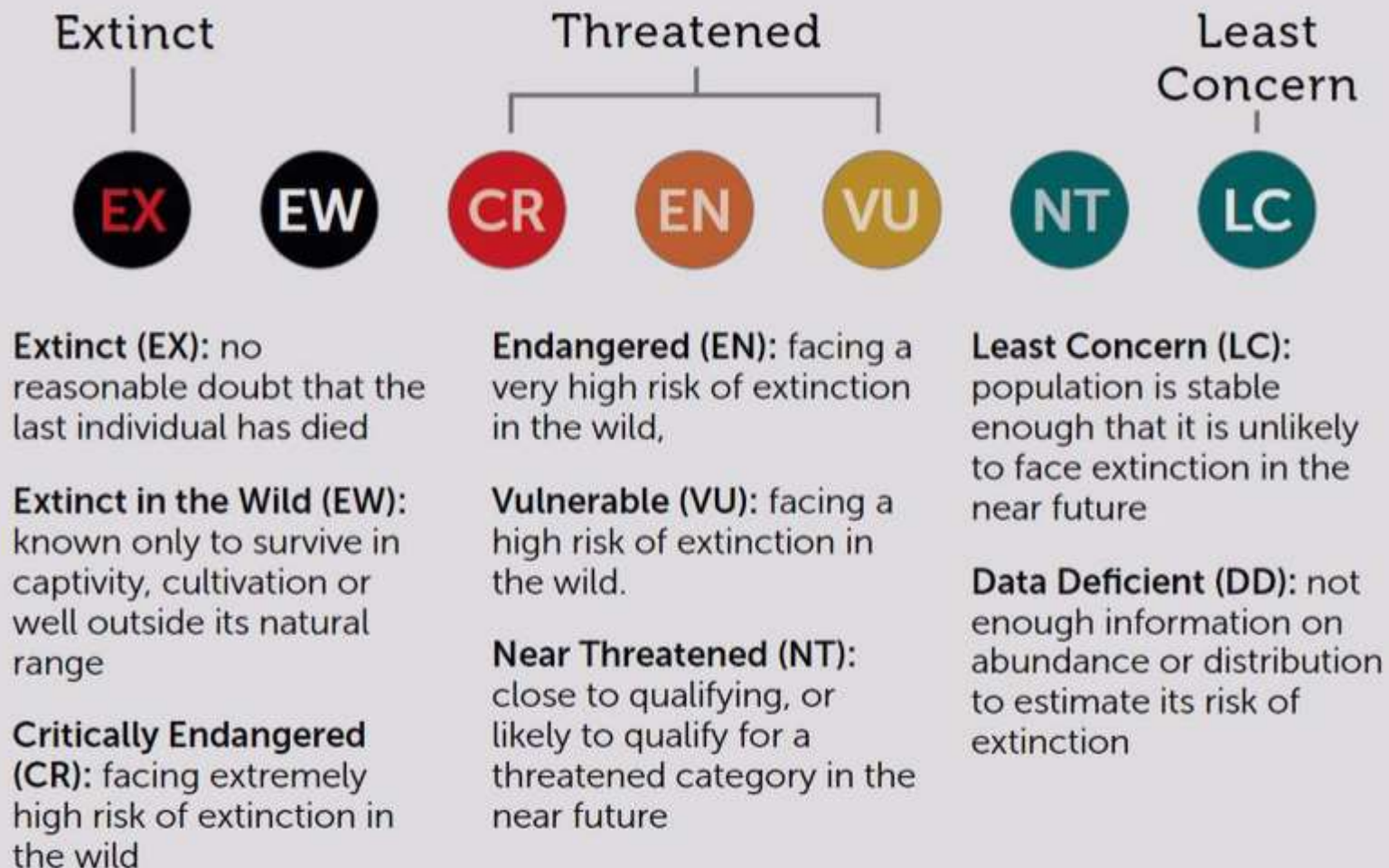
IUCN Red List

IUCN releases Red List of Threatened Species since 1964.

IUCN Red List-India is updated by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) from time to time

IUCN Red List-categories

THE RED LIST CATEGORIES



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