Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Examine the historical causes of the extinction of the cheetah in India. Discuss the ecological significance and major challenges of species reintroduction programmes.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 03/11/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Historical hunting; colonial bounty programmes; habitat destruction; species extinction; ecological restoration; prey availability; habitat suitability; genetic diversity; human–wildlife conflict; long-term monitoring

Model Answer

Introduction

The cheetah's disappearance from India illustrates how human activities can drive wildlife populations towards extinction. According to the supplied article, royal hunting, colonial bounty programmes and habitat destruction contributed to its historical decline.

Causes of Extinction

The capture of cheetahs for royal hunting reduced wild populations, while colonial-era bounty programmes further increased pressures on wildlife. Habitat destruction also diminished suitable living spaces and affected the ecological conditions required for survival. The article states that the last wild individuals were killed in 1947 and that India declared the species extinct in 1952.

Significance of Reintroduction

Reintroduction can help restore a species to its former range, strengthen conservation awareness and contribute to ecological restoration. However, successful establishment requires suitable habitat, adequate prey, genetic

management and protection from human-related threats.

Major Challenges and Way Forward

Conservation authorities must monitor survival, reproduction, dispersal and disease risks. Habitat protection, community participation, conflict mitigation and scientific assessment are essential for long-term success. Reintroduction should complement broader ecosystem conservation rather than operate as an isolated intervention.

Conclusion

Cheetah reintroduction offers an opportunity for wildlife restoration, but its success depends on sustained scientific monitoring, habitat management and community support.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP