



Citizen science initiative helps save hornbills

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Highlights

- A citizen science initiative of documenting Indian hornbills is providing valuable inputs for the conservation of the unique bird.
- The data on hornbill presence outside protected areas would be crucial in identifying and protecting their habitats from possible threats and development projects, scientists said.
- The **Hornbill Watch initiative** (www.hornbills.in) is an interactive web interface that allows a person to report on hornbills anywhere in India.
- People can record the observation of a live hornbill, note its call or report a dead, hunted or captive bird.

Lack of information

- There are nine hornbill species in India, but experts say that information on its distribution in the country is not very clear.
- Hornbills were reported from across 70 protected areas in the country. While 41% of the observations were made within protected areas, 59% were made outside.
- The reports included notes on the **endangered Narcondam hornbill**, restricted to an area of 6 sq.km. of the Narcondam Island in the Andamans.
- Vulnerable or **near threatened** species such as the **rufous-necked hornbill**, the Austen's brown hornbill and the great hornbill were observed in several States in northeastern India.
- Involving people in observation of hornbills was relatively easy because the birds are identifiable even to an untrained eye.
- Information on hornbill presence was recorded from Sikkim and Chhattisgarh, where there were no earlier records.
- According to the scientist, sighting records of the oriental pied hornbill and the Indian grey hornbill in green spaces within cities like New Delhi and Chandigarh highlighted the important role of urban tree cover in maintaining its habitat.