



In news

Consider the following statements about Smooth-Coated Otters and their conservation:

1. They are listed in Appendix I of CITES, restricting their international trade.
2. The species primarily inhabits the Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins in India.
3. Smooth-Coated Otters construct extensive burrows along riverbanks for shelter and breeding.
4. They are known for forming large social groups and exhibiting cooperative hunting behavior.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four



Solution: C

Statement 1 is incorrect - They are listed under Appendix II of CITES, which restricts but does not fully prohibit trade.

Statement 2 is correct - The Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins provide key habitats for Smooth-Coated Otters in India.

Statement 3 is correct - They build burrows along riverbanks for shelter and breeding.

Statement 4 is correct - They form large family groups and engage in cooperative hunting.

About the Smooth-Coated Otter:

Scientific Name: *Lutrogale perspicillata*

Habitat: Found in wetlands, rivers, lakes, mangroves, and estuaries across South and Southeast Asia.

Distribution: Native to India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar,



Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Physical Characteristics:

Larger than other otter species, with shorter fur and a flattened tail.

Has webbed feet for efficient swimming.

Primarily carnivorous, feeding on fish, crustaceans, and amphibians.

IUCN Status & Conservation

IUCN Red List: Vulnerable (VU) due to habitat destruction, poaching, and water pollution.

CITES Listing: Appendix II, restricting international trade.

Threats:

Habitat loss due to wetland degradation.

Illegal hunting for fur and pet trade.

Decline in fish population impacting food availability.

Conservation Measures:

Protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India).

Conservation projects focusing on wetland restoration and anti-poaching efforts.