

# **HISTORY OF WORLD WILDLIFE DAY UNDER THE THEME “ BIG CATS- PREDATORS UNDER THREAT”**

**BY**

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# THE VALUE OF WILDLIFE

- Wildlife comprises both plants and animals
- Wildlife contributes to ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic aspects of sustainable development and human well-being.
- Unfortunately, wildlife are facing myriad threats, such as habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, overexploitation and invasive species.
- This has resulted in the decline in the number and diversity of wildlife globally and is pushing many species towards extinction.
- Among the major threats to wildlife is wildlife crime/trafficking, which has been recognized as the fourth most lucrative illegal activity in the world
- These include both threatened species, those protected by international laws.



# HISTORY OF WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

- WWD is a day to remind humanity of its responsibilities to our world and the life forms we share with it.
- The day is celebrated to raise awareness among people on the multitude of benefits that conservation in general and in particular that of wildlife provides to people.
- It is also done to remind government of its role to continue to formulate and implement policies that will conserve our wildlife for the benefits of present and future generations.

# HISTORY OF WWD CONTINUED

- WWD had its origin from the recommendation made by The Convention on International Trade on Engendered Species (CITES) which is organ of the UN established on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1973.
- CITES is an international agreement between the governments and some conservation organizations to protect wild plants and animals and ensure their survival.
- The CITES Convention is ratified by 183 countries.
- At the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of CITES held in Bangkok, Thailand from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 recommendation was made to the UN that 3<sup>rd</sup> March of every year be designated as WWD.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013, at its 68th session, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3<sup>rd</sup> March of every year as WWD.
- CITES and other relevant organizations, such as World Wildlife Fund, World Conservation Society, etc. of the UN are to facilitate the implementation of WWD.

# HISTORY OF WWD CONTINUED

- Incidentally, the day coincided with the day CITES was established in 1973 and WWD celebration commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2014.
- What we are celebrating today is fourth in the series of the celebrations.
- The commemoration of the day is yearly done under different themes, for instance this year's theme is "Big Cats" - Predators under threat.
- In 2017, the theme is "Listen to the young voices".
- In 2016, the theme is "the future of wildlife is in our hands" with a sub-theme "the future of elephants is in our hands".
- In 2015, the theme is "It's time to get serious about wildlife crime".

# THE THEME “BIG CATS” PREDATORS UNDER THREAT

- This year’s theme focuses on the “Big Cats” that principally include cheetah, clouded leopard, jaguar, leopard, lion, puma, snow leopard, hyena, tiger, etc.
- According to CITES these most majestic predators are facing many and varied threats, primarily caused by human activities, be it habitat loss, poaching, human-wildlife conflict, or climate change.
- Lions and cheetah, for instance, have lost 90% of their historic ranges, respectively.
- Snow leopard, have suspected to have decline by at least 20% under two decades.

# Threats to Big Cats in Nigeria

- Historically, there have been records of the presence of the big cats, especially lion, hyena and leopard.
- However, today, their population has declined drastically and they are confined within protected areas.
- For instance, the last lion survey in the country estimated lion population at about 14 individuals confined within Yankari and Kainji Lake National Park, respectively.

# Conclusion

- Considering the drastic decline of big cats in Nigeria and elsewhere, this calls for urgent need of actions towards conserving these majestic predators, as they play great role in the balance of nature as well as serve as economic tool in tourism.

**THANK YOU  
FOR  
LISTENING**