Wildlife Institute of India to Estimate Numbers of All Four Bear Species

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Source report: 21 October 2026 (ANI, through Devdiscourse).

Introduction

The **Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun** will assess the numbers of all **four bear species** found in India. An official gave this information to ANI on condition of anonymity.



Original symbolic image: pcsmantra.com

Key Facts (as per the report)

- The first phase will focus mainly on human-sloth bear conflict in protected areas. Proposals for the other three species will be sent ahead. According to the official the

final numbers will come out in five years.

- **There are four species in India:** the Himalayan brown bear, the Asiatic (Himalayan) black bear, the sloth bear and the sun bear.
- Himalayan brown and black bears are found in the Himalayan regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The sloth bear is found in dry and moist deciduous forests, thorn forests and scrub.
- The sun bear is the smallest of the bears. It lives mainly in dense lowland forests of South-East Asia and a small part of its range extends to North-East India and Bangladesh.
- Cases of human-bear conflict are more with the sloth bear across the country; encounters with the sun bear are rare (as per the report).

Context and Detailed Explanation

India is distinctive in bear diversity: four of the world's eight species are found here - the Himalayan brown bear, the Asiatic (Himalayan) black bear, the sloth bear and the sun bear. The distribution map is an exam fact: Himalayan brown and black bears in the Himalayan regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh; the sloth bear in dry-moist deciduous forests, thorn forests and scrub; the sun bear - the smallest species - mainly in dense lowland forests of South-East Asia, a small part of whose range extends to North-East India and Bangladesh.

Outline of the study: WII (Dehradun) will assess the numbers of all four species; the first phase will focus mainly on human-sloth bear conflict in protected areas, proposals for the other three species will be sent ahead; according to the official the final numbers will come in five years. Cases of human-bear conflict are more with the sloth bear across the country, while encounters with the sun bear are rare - this very relation between distribution and conflict explains the priority of the first phase.

Caution on the source: this information was given to ANI by an official on condition of anonymity - that is, it is not yet a formal announcement but a report-based news item; keep it in that category.

Utility for the Exam

Biodiversity, human-wildlife conflict, species conservation.

Prelims Style: Practice Questions

Question 1. How many species of bear are found in India?

(a) Two

(b) Three

(c) Four

(d) Five

▼ Answer and Explanation
Answer: (c) Four. India has the Himalayan brown, Asiatic black, sloth and sun bears, that is, four species.

Question 2. In which region is the sun bear mainly found in India?

(a) North-East India

(b) Western Ghats

(c) Thar Desert

(d) Terai region

▼ Answer and Explanation
Answer: (a) North-East India. A small part of the sun bear's range extends to North-East India.

Question 3. Where is the headquarters of WII?

(a) Bhopal

(b) Dehradun

(c) Jabalpur

(d) Mysuru

▼ Answer and Explanation
Answer: (b) Dehradun. WII is located in Dehradun.

Sources

- ANI / Devdiscourse (21 October 2026): https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/headlines/3995506-wildlife-institute-of-india-to-estimate-numbers-of-all-4-bear-species-in-india-official