



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY / PROJECT TIGER

Statutory Body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
(Government of India)

Buxa Tiger Reserve

Buxa Tiger Reserve is situated in the Alipurduar Sub-division of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal. The Reserve stretches over a length of 50 km from West to East and 35 km from North to South.

Area of the Tiger Reserve

Core/Critical Tiger Habitat	: 390.58 sq km
Buffer	: 370.29 sq km
Total	: 760.87 sq km

Location:

Latitudes	: 26°30¢ to 26°55¢ N
Longitudes	: 89°20¢ to 89°55¢ E.

Habitat Attributes

Flora

The forests of the reserve can be broadly classified as the 'Moist Tropical Forest' of Champion and Seth's (1968) recent classification. As the extent of this forest ranges from plains up to an elevation of 1,750 m. in the hills, a distinct variation in the crop composition is visible depending on altitude, soil moisture, topography drainage and soil formation. So far 352 species of trees, 133 species of shrubs, 189 species of herbs, 108 species of climbers, 144 species of orchids, 46 species of grasses, 16 species of sedges, 6 species of canes and 4 species of bamboos have been reported.

Fauna

Buxa has a good faunal diversity. As many as, 68 species of mammals, 41 species of reptiles, more than 246 species of birds, 4 species of Amphibians along with 103 species of fishes and around 500 species of insects have been recorded.

The main carnivores include: Indian Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), Hog badger (*Arctonyx collaris*), Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*), Fishing Cat (*Prionailurus viverina*), Civet Cat (*Viverricula indica*), Hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*), Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Indian fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*) and Wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*). The Marbled Cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*) and the Golden Cat (*Catopuma temmincki*) were reported earlier but have not been sighted in the recent past.

The herbivores include: elephant, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer and hog deer. Besides, there are other faunal species like: wild pig, porcupine, rhesus macaque, common pangolin and the Chinese pangolin. The numerous rivers and streams in the habitat contain a variety of fishes including the Mahseer. The reptiles include: King Cobra, Russel's viper, Black Krait, Indian python, reticulated python. The habitat is rich in avifauna and the important ones are hill myna, crested serpent eagle, black francolin, horned bills and various species of water fowl.

Tiger Status

Historically, tigers were distributed throughout the reserve including the southernmost ranges and fringe areas. However, the reserve has a low tiger density at present.

Core

The core area of Buxa is devoid of human settlements. However, the enclaved villages of buffer and surrounding tea gardens exert considerable biotic pressure. The habitat has a number of old teak plantations.

Buffer

The buffer has a large number of forest villages (37) in addition to holdings, surrounded by as many as 34 tea gardens with a human population of around 1.67 lakh. Besides, as many as 46 revenue villages are also in close proximity. Thus, fine tuning forestry operations, addressing human-wildlife interface problems providing ecologically sustainable livelihood options to local people for reducing their resource dependency on forests and protection are important thrust areas.

Corridor

The reserve has corridor connectivity across the border with the forests of Bhutan in the North, on the East it has linkages with the Kochugaon forests, Manas Tiger Reserve and on the West with the Jaldapara National Park. The following corridor links are important:

- **Buxa-Titi (via Torsa):** connecting Rangamati Reserve Forest area of Buxa Tiger Reserve with Titi Reserve Forest.
- **Buxa-Titi (via Beech and Bharnabari Tea estate):** connecting Bharnabari Reserve Forest of Buxa Tiger Reserve and Titi Reserve Forest situated south of Dalsingpara tea estate by passing through Bharnabari tea estate and Beech tea estate.
- **Nimati-Chilapata (Buxa-Chilapata):** facilitating elephant movement between Nimati Range of Buxa Tiger Reserve and Chilapata Reserve Forest of Wildlife III Forest Division thereby maintaining elephant movement between Buxa Tiger Reserve and Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Buxa-Ripu at Sankosh (Sankosh):** This corridor is a contiguous forest that connects Buxa Tiger Reserve of West Bengal with the Ripu Reserve Forest of Kochugaon Forest Division, Assam.

The corridors mentioned above form part of North East and Brahmaputra Valley tiger landscape, providing crucial linkages for the dispersal of tigers to various protected areas like, Buxa, Manas Tiger Reserve, Phipsoo Wildlife Sanctuary in Bhutan and Jaldapara National Park.

Managerial Issues

Buxa Tiger Reserve has a low density owing to changes in the habitat over many decades due to increasing anthropogenic pressure. Thus, reduction of biotic pressure by providing ecologically sustainable livelihood options to local people, addressing human-wildlife interface, stepped up protection and monitoring of wild animals are important. Besides, retrofitting safeguards are required to prevent train hits of elephants.

Good Practices

Protection, monitoring protocol, sharing revenue for community development, 24X7 surveillance in check posts and initiatives to elicit public support.