



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Securing Tigers for Posterity

Tiger

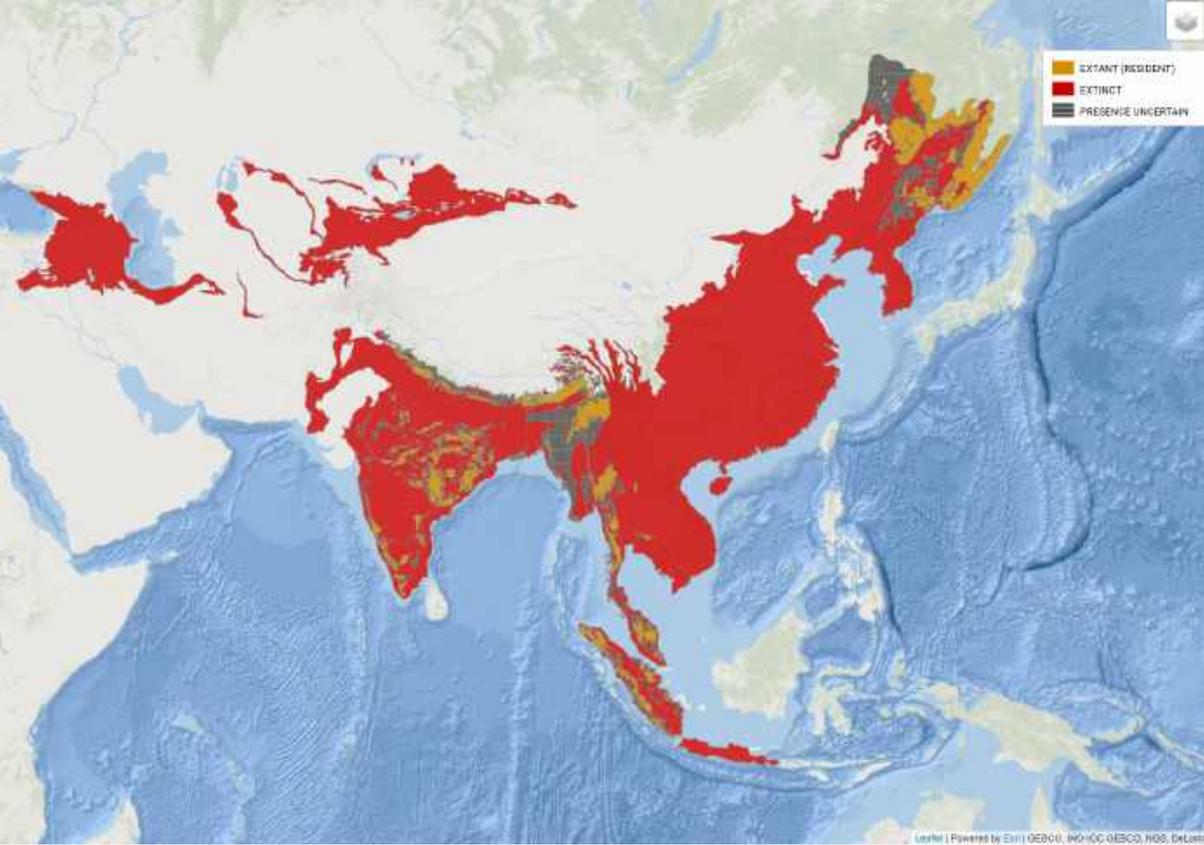
(*Panthera tigris*)

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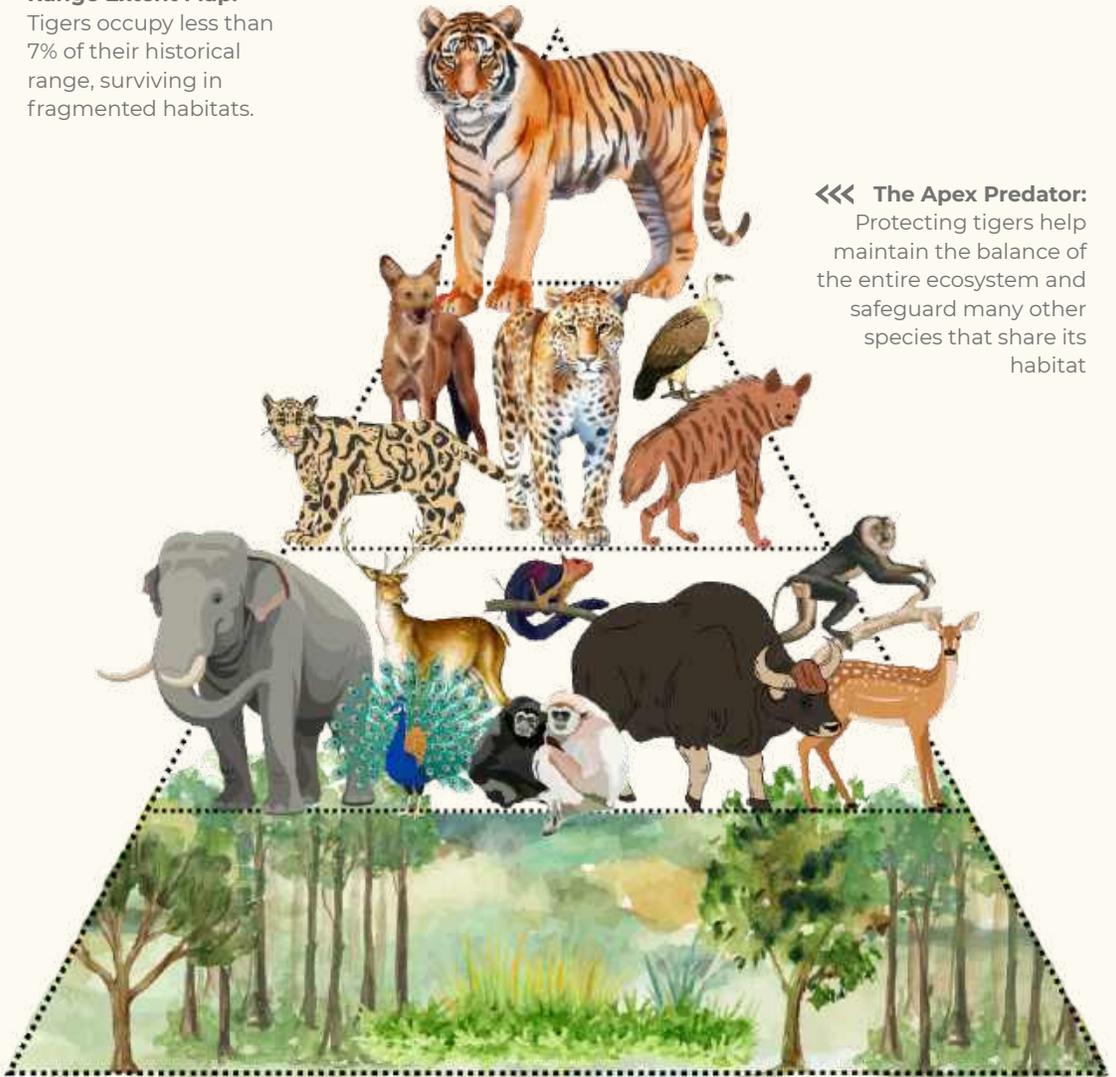
The tiger, an apex predator and a conservation-dependent species, stands as a powerful symbol of ecological balance. They require vast, healthy habitats to sustain viable populations. The tiger acts as an umbrella species, safeguarding forests and ensuring the survival of countless other rare and endangered animals that share its home.

India is home to estimated 3,682 tigers, accounting for nearly 70% of the world's wild tiger population. Encouragingly, this population is showing a steady increase - growing at an annual rate of about 6% - a testament to sustained commitment and effective management practices.



Range Extent Map:

Tigers occupy less than 7% of their historical range, surviving in fragmented habitats.



«« **The Apex Predator:**

Protecting tigers help maintain the balance of the entire ecosystem and safeguard many other species that share its habitat



GENESIS OF TIGER CONSERVATION IN INDIA

India's journey in tiger conservation is one of vision, resilience, and reform - a story that mirrors the nation's growing commitment to ecological stewardship. Once teetering on the brink of extinction, the tiger's fate in India has been transformed through decades of concerted effort, policy innovation, and public awareness. The country's conservation movement, driven by both ecological necessity and cultural reverence, stands today as a global model of how a nation can revive and sustain its natural heritage through vision, governance, and community participation.

The Decline: A Wake-Up Call for Conservation

By the late 1960s, India's majestic tiger - once widespread across the subcontinent - faced a steep decline. Unregulated hunting, large-scale deforestation, and habitat fragmentation had reduced tiger populations to a fraction of their former strength. Trophy hunting and trade in tiger skins were rampant, while expanding agriculture and human settlements encroached upon forests. Surveys conducted in the early 1970s revealed alarming figures, with estimates suggesting fewer than 2,000 tigers remaining in the wild. This crisis served as a wake-up call, prompting urgent national action to save India's apex predator from extinction.



The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: A Legal Milestone

Recognizing the need for strong legislative protection, the Government of India enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA) in 1972, a landmark in India's conservation history. The WPA provided a **comprehensive legal framework to safeguard wild species and their habitats, regulating hunting, trade, and exploitation of wildlife**. It established protected areas such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and closed areas, forming the backbone of India's conservation network. This Act not only **laid the foundation for Project Tiger** but also **institutionalized wildlife protection across the nation**.

The Launch of Project Tiger, 1973: A Historic Initiative

Building upon the WPA's foundation, the Government of India launched **Project Tiger in 1973**- one of the world's most ambitious wildlife conservation programs. Spearheaded by the then Prime Minister, **Project Tiger began with nine tiger reserves covering 18,278 km², focusing on core areas free from human disturbance**. The project aimed to ensure a viable population of tigers in their natural habitats while preserving biodiversity. Over time, it evolved into a model for landscape-level conservation, integrating local communities and adaptive management strategies.

Photo: Kailash Sankhala, the first Director of Project Tiger (above), and Field Directors of the first nine tiger reserves of India (below)

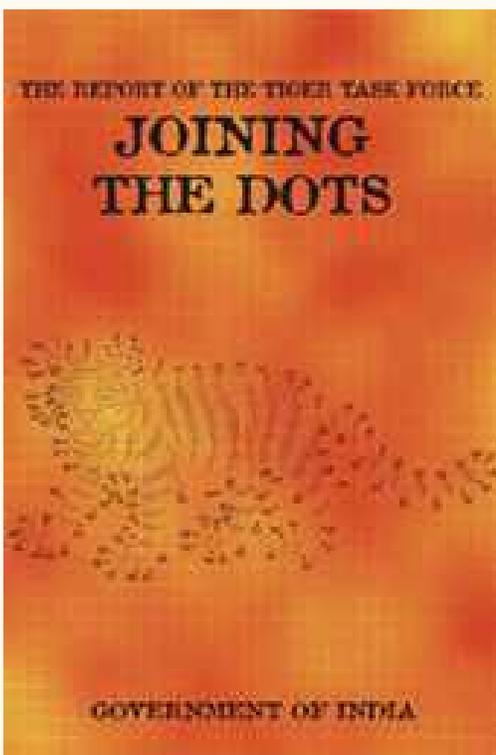




The Sariska Debacle: A Turning Point

In the early 2000s, a major setback shook the nation's confidence in tiger conservation - the **Sariska Tiger Reserve crisis in Rajasthan**, where all resident tigers were found to have disappeared due to poaching. The revelation in 2005 **exposed serious flaws in monitoring, enforcement, and protection systems**. Sariska became a symbol of both failure and renewal, forcing a critical review of India's conservation approach. The debacle underscored the urgent need for scientific monitoring, accountability, and stronger institutional frameworks to safeguard tiger populations.

The Tiger Task Force: Rethinking Conservation Strategies



In response to the Sariska crisis, the Government of India established the Tiger Task Force (TTF) in 2005 to re-examine conservation policies and recommend reforms. The **TTF emphasized the need for greater transparency, community participation, and landscape-based planning**. Its recommendations focused on **strengthening protection mechanisms, improving coordination between forest departments and local communities, and promoting coexistence rather than exclusion**. The TTF report - "Joining the Dots" - became a blueprint for the next phase of tiger conservation in India.

The Establishment of NTCA: Institutional Strengthening



Following the TTF's recommendations, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was constituted in 2006** under an amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act. The NTCA **brought a new era of standardized management, scientific oversight, and accountability to tiger conservation.** It was empowered to **ensure effective implementation of Project Tiger guidelines, monitor reserves, allocate funding, and coordinate with states and central agencies.** The NTCA also introduced the concept of **Core, Buffer and Corridor, adopting a landscape approach, and integrating ecological security with local livelihoods.** This institutional reform provided a strong backbone for long-term tiger protection in India.





OBJECTIVES OF THE NTCA



Provide statutory authority to Project Tiger, ensuring that its directives are legally binding and effectively enforced across all Tiger Reserves.



Strengthen accountability between the Central and State Governments in the management of Tiger Reserves through formal agreements within the federal framework.



Facilitate Parliamentary oversight to ensure transparency, efficiency, and responsible governance in tiger conservation initiatives.



Integrate the livelihood concerns of communities living around Tiger Reserves into conservation planning, promoting coexistence between people and wildlife.



POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

According to Section 380 (1) and (2) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (as amended in 2006), the National Tiger Conservation Authority has the following powers and responsibilities:

- **Approve Tiger Conservation Plans:** The NTCA reviews and approves tiger conservation plans prepared by State Governments.
- **Evaluate Land Use and Ecology:** It studies and assesses the ecological sustainability of different activities and can stop land uses that harm the environment, such as mining, industries, or other projects, inside tiger reserves.
- **Set Standards for Tourism and Conservation:** The NTCA sets rules and guidelines for tourism and for Project Tiger activities in both the core and buffer zones of tiger reserves. It also ensures that these rules are properly followed.
- **Address Human-Wildlife Conflicts:** It plans measures to reduce conflicts between people and wild animals, promoting peaceful coexistence, especially in forest areas outside national parks, sanctuaries, and tiger reserves.
- **Monitor and Share Information:** The NTCA collects and provides information about protection measures, future conservation plans, tiger and prey populations, habitat conditions, disease monitoring, animal deaths, patrolling, and any incidents. It also prepares and shares future conservation strategies.



- **Approve and Coordinate Research:** The NTCA approves and coordinates research and monitoring on tigers, their prey, co-predators, habitats, and related ecological and social factors. It also evaluates the results of such studies.
- **Protect Tiger Corridors and Reserves:** It ensures that tiger reserves and the areas connecting them to other protected zones are not used for activities that harm the environment. Such use is allowed only if it serves public interest, has the approval of the National Board for Wildlife, and is recommended by the NTCA.
- **Support State Tiger Reserve Management:** The NTCA helps state authorities manage tiger reserves by promoting biodiversity conservation through eco-development and community participation, in line with approved management plans. It also supports similar conservation work in nearby areas following both Central and State laws.
- **Provide Technical and Legal Support:** It ensures that tiger conservation plans receive the necessary scientific, technological, and legal assistance for effective implementation.
- **Build Capacity and Train Staff:** The NTCA organizes ongoing training programs to improve the skills of officers and staff working in tiger reserves.
- **Carry Out Other Necessary Functions:** The Authority performs any other functions required to fulfill the goals of tiger and habitat conservation under this Act.
- **Power to Issue Directions:** The NTCA can issue written directions to any person, officer, or authority for the protection of tigers or tiger reserves. Everyone receiving such directions must follow them.



THRUST AREAS





Stepped-up protection/ networking/ surveillance/ financial assistance



Strengthening of protection infrastructure and habitat management as per Tiger Conservation Plans of tiger reserves



Adopting a landscape-based multi-tiered approach including buffers, corridors and Eco-sensitive zones for long term survival of tigers



Notifying and consolidating new tiger reserves



Creating inviolate core critical tiger habitats



Use of information technology in wildlife monitoring and crime prevention



Addressing human-wildlife conflicts



Fostering awareness for eliciting local public support through community stewardship and sustainable livelihood models



Capacity building of frontline personnel in wildlife monitoring, reserve management and crime prevention



Development of a national repository of individually-identified tiger photographs



Active management of tiger populations from saturated landscapes and human dominated areas



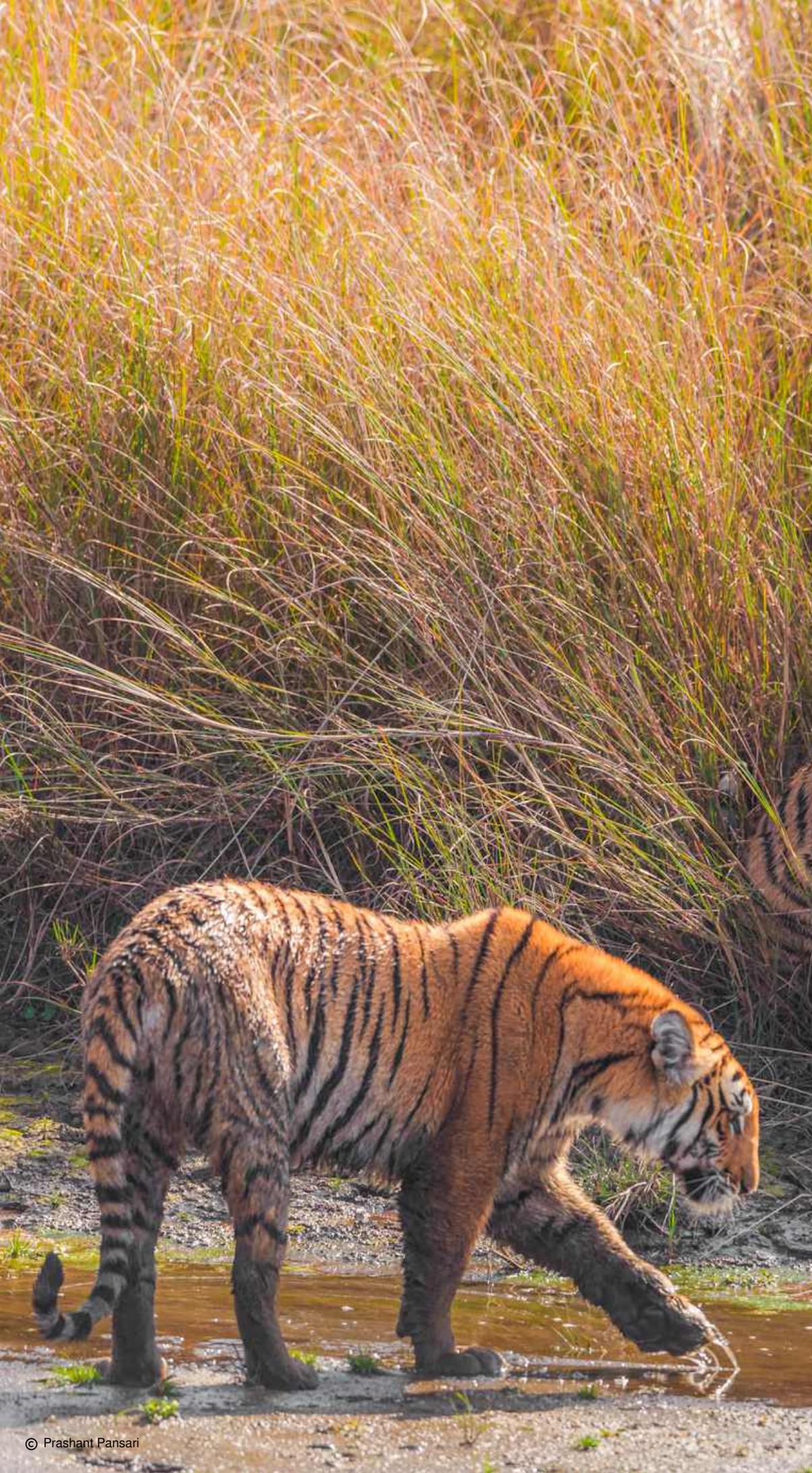
Conducting the country level assessment of tiger, co-predators, prey and their habitats



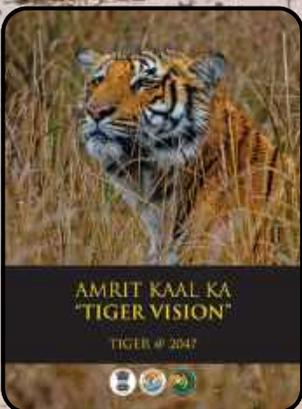
Conducting independent management effectiveness evaluation of Tiger Reserves



Fostering Research







AMRIT KAAL KA
"TIGER VISION"

TIGER @ 2047





AMRIT KAAL KA TIGER VISION 2047

Released by the NTCA in April 2023 during the Golden Jubilee celebration of Project Tiger, the **Amrit Kaal Ka Tiger Vision – Tiger@2047** outlines a 25-year roadmap for the future of tiger conservation in India. The vision emphasizes a **holistic, landscape-level approach to ensure ecological security while integrating community participation, climate resilience, green investment, and sustainable development**. It aims to position the tiger as a symbol of India's natural heritage and ecological well-being, guiding the nation's conservation efforts toward a greener, more balanced, and biodiversity-rich future by 2047, marking 100 years of India's independence.

Vision: Securing Tigers for Posterity

Goal: To maintain a viable and sustainable population of tiger in the wild based on carrying capacity of the habitat and to bring all potential tiger habitat under the coverage of Project Tiger

Objective: To ensure maintenance of a viable population of tiger in India for scientific, economic, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values and presence for all times, areas of biological diversity for benefit, education and awareness of the society.

Key Targets:

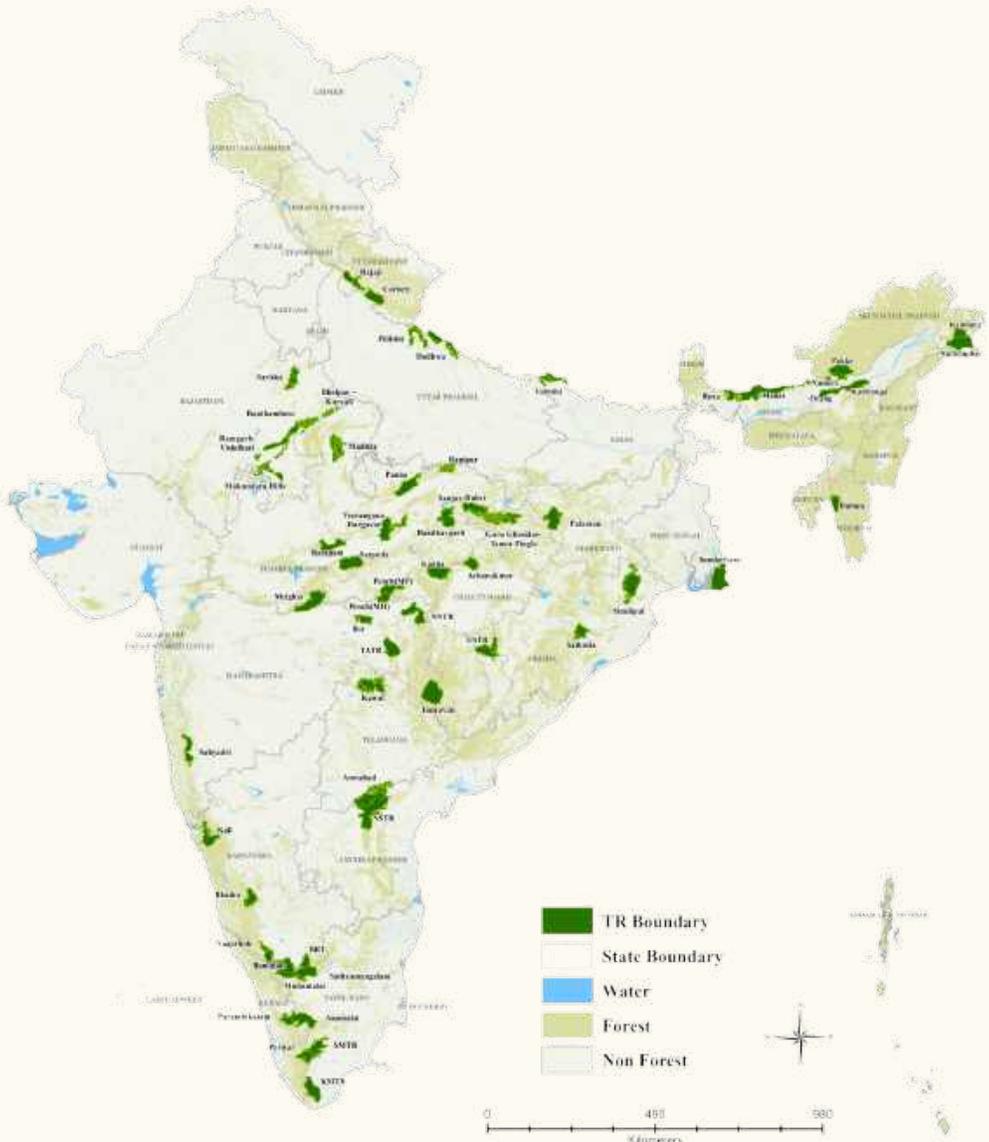
- Bring all potential tiger habitats under Project Tiger's protective umbrella.
- Enhance ecosystem services like water security, climate regulation, and biodiversity.
- Empower buffer communities, reducing conflict and improving livelihoods through conservation-linked benefits.
- Position the tiger as a flagship for green investment, encouraging public-private partnerships in corridors, eco-tourism, and sustainability.
- Mainstream tiger habitat needs into health, agriculture, climate, and infrastructure planning.
- Strengthen multi-level coordination across government tiers and sectors for timely action, and global conservation linkages and transboundary cooperation.



TIGER RESERVES IN INDIA

Tigers in India currently occupy about 1,03,408 square kilometres of forest area, which is roughly 16% of the country's total potential tiger habitat (as per the 2022 assessment). Of this population, nearly 60–65% of India's tigers live within the well-protected designated Tiger Reserves, where human disturbance is minimal and conservation measures are effectively implemented.

Since the launch of Project Tiger in 1973, India has made consistent and determined efforts to expand the network of protected areas dedicated to tiger conservation. The initiative began with nine tiger reserves, covering some of the most important tiger habitats in the country. Over the years, through strong policy measures, scientific management, and collaboration between the Central and State Governments, the network has grown significantly. Today, **India has 58 tiger reserves spread across 18 states, encompassing a total area of about 84,500 square kilometres, accounting for nearly 2.56% of the country's geographical area.**



State	Tiger Reserve	Total Area (sq km)
Andhra Pradesh	Nagarjunsagar Sagar	3,296.31
Arunachal Pradesh	Namdapha	2,052.82
Arunachal Pradesh	Pakke	1,198.45
Assam	Manas	2,837.10
Assam	Kaziranga	1,173.58
Assam	Nameri	464
Assam	Orang	492.46
Bihar	Valmiki	899.38
Chhattisgarh	Achanakmar	914.02
Chhattisgarh	Indravati	2,799.07
Chhattisgarh	Udanti Sitanadi	1,842.54
Chhattisgarh	Guru Ghasidas – Tamor Pingla	2,829.39
Jharkhand	Palamau	1,129.93
Karnataka	Bandipur	1,456.30
Karnataka	Kali	1,097.51
Karnataka	Nagarhole	1,205.76
Karnataka	Bhadra	1,064.29
Karnataka	Biligiri Ranganatha Temple	574.82
Kerala	Periyar	925
Kerala	Parambikulam	643.66
Madhya Pradesh	Kanha	2,051.79
Madhya Pradesh	Bandhavgarh	1,536.93

State	Tiger Reserve	Total Area (sq km)
Madhya Pradesh	Panna	1,598.10
Madhya Pradesh	Pench	1,179.63
Madhya Pradesh	Satpura	2,133.31
Madhya Pradesh	Sanjay Dhubri	1,674.50
Madhya Pradesh	Veerangana Durgavati	2,339.12
Madhya Pradesh	Ratapani	1,271.47
Madhya Pradesh	Madhav	1,651.39
Maharashtra	Melghat	2,768.52
Maharashtra	Tadobha Andhari	1,727.59
Maharashtra	Pench – MH	741.22
Maharashtra	Nawegaon Nagzira	1,894.94
Maharashtra	Bor	816.27
Maharashtra	Sahyadri	1,165.57
Mizoram	Dampa	988
Rajasthan	Ranthambore	1,411.29
Rajasthan	Sariska	1,213.34
Rajasthan	Mukundara	759.99
Rajasthan	Ramgarh Vishdhari	1,501.89
Rajasthan	Dholpur – Karauli	599.6406

State	Tiger Reserve	Total Area (sq km)
Tamil Nadu	Anamalai	1,479.87
Tamil Nadu	Mudumalai	688.59
Tamil Nadu	Kalakad Mundanthurai	1,601.54
Tamil Nadu	Sathyamangalam	1,408.40
Tamil Nadu	Srivilliputhur Megamalai	1,016.57
Telangana	Amrabad	2,611.39
Telangana	Kawal	2,015.44
Uttar Pradesh	Dudhwa	2,201.77
Uttar Pradesh	Pilibhit	730.25
Uttar Pradesh	Amanagarh buffer	80.6
Uttar Pradesh	Ranipur	529.3612
Uttarakhand	Corbett	1,288.31
Uttarakhand	Rajaji	1,075.17
West Bengal	Sundarban	2,584.89
West Bengal	Buxa	757.9
Odisha	Simlipal	2,750.00
Odisha	Satkoshia	963.87

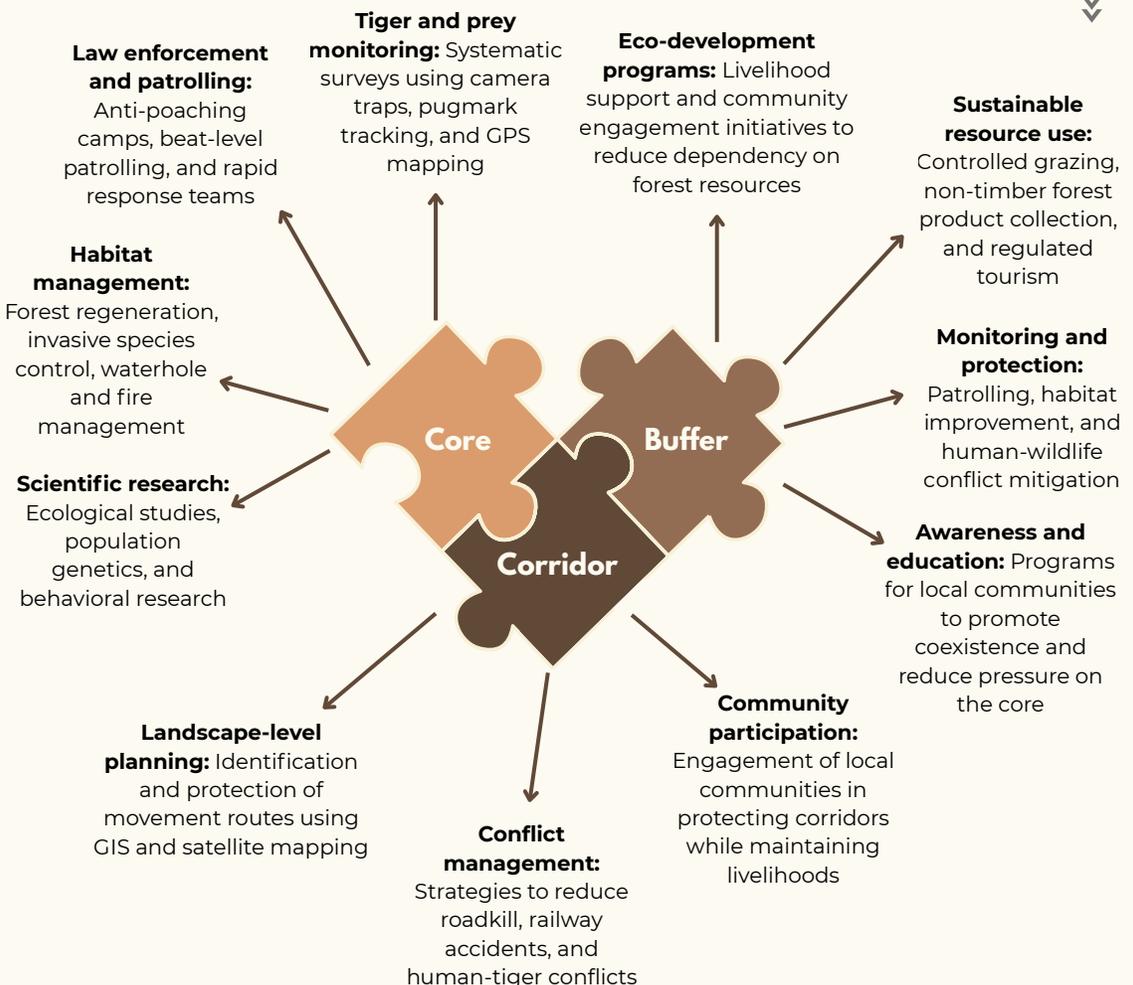


TIGER CONSERVATION PLANS

India's tiger conservation efforts are guided by meticulously developed Tiger Conservation Plans, prepared for each tiger reserve. These plans are periodically reviewed and approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to ensure that conservation measures are scientifically sound, effective, and aligned with contemporary ecological knowledge.

The plans address several critical aspects, including habitat management, anti-poaching strategies, monitoring of prey populations, mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts, community participation and sustainable development. They provide for strict protection in the core areas of tiger reserves while regulating activities in buffer zones. Scientific research and continuous monitoring are integral to these plans, enabling accurate assessment of tiger populations, evaluation of habitat conditions, and formulation of evidence-based management interventions.

Major components of a TCP: Zone specific strategies incorporated for targeted management





MONITORING OF TIGERS, CO-PREDATORS, PREY AND THEIR HABITATS

Monitoring tigers in India is a critical component of wildlife conservation, as these apex predators are indicators of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Over the years, **India has developed a scientifically rigorous system that combines field observations, camera trapping, GPS data, and patrolling records to generate reliable information.** Tools like M-STRIPEs have further strengthened this process by enabling real-time data collection, hierarchical analysis, and visualization of tiger habitats across the country.

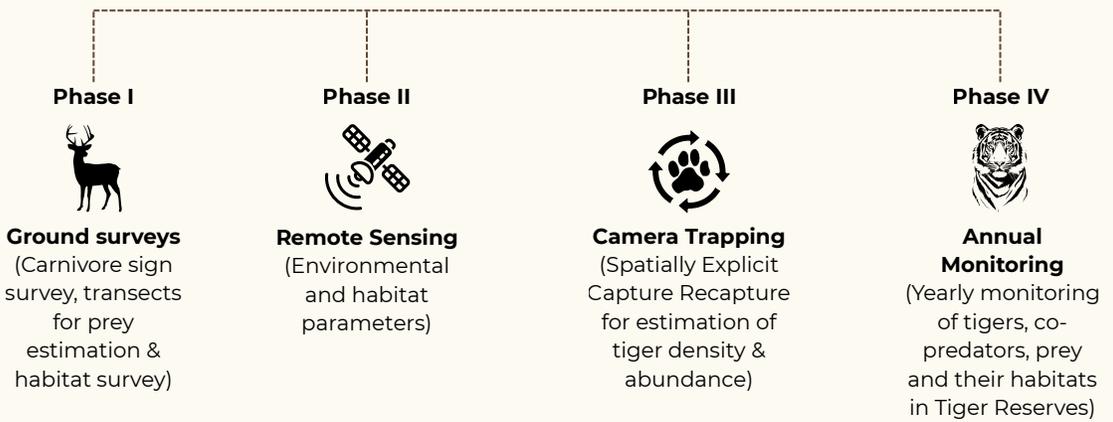
Building on these monitoring efforts, the **All India Tiger Estimation (AITE)** was launched by the NTCA in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). Initiated in 2006 and **conducted every four years, this exercise represents the world's largest wildlife survey,** covering tiger populations, co-predators, prey species, and habitat quality across all tiger-bearing states. The methodology combines camera traps, line transect surveys, and sign-based monitoring, ensuring scientifically



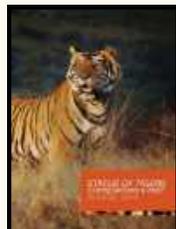
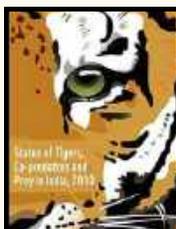
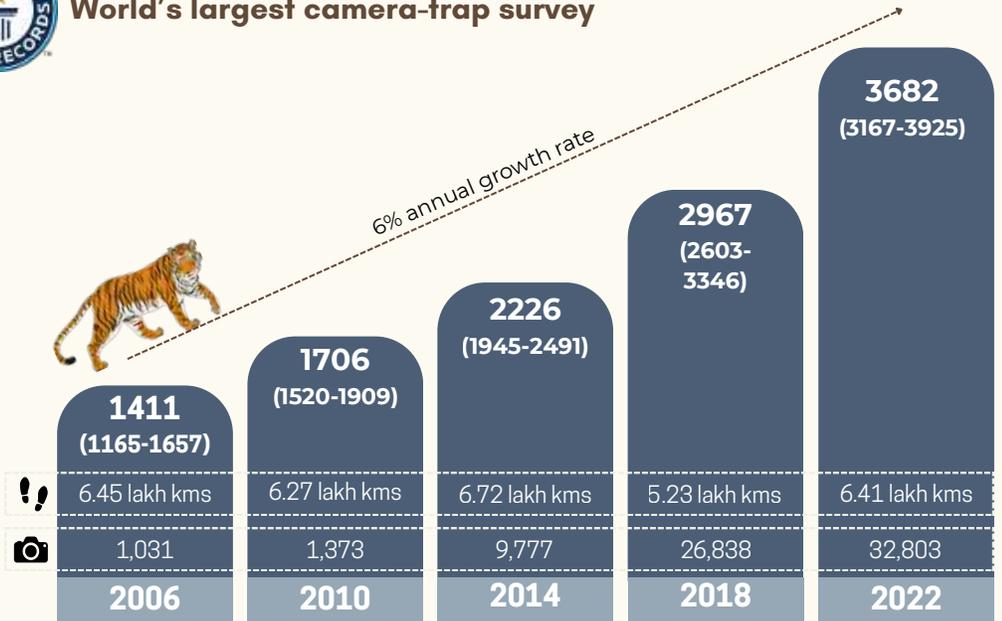


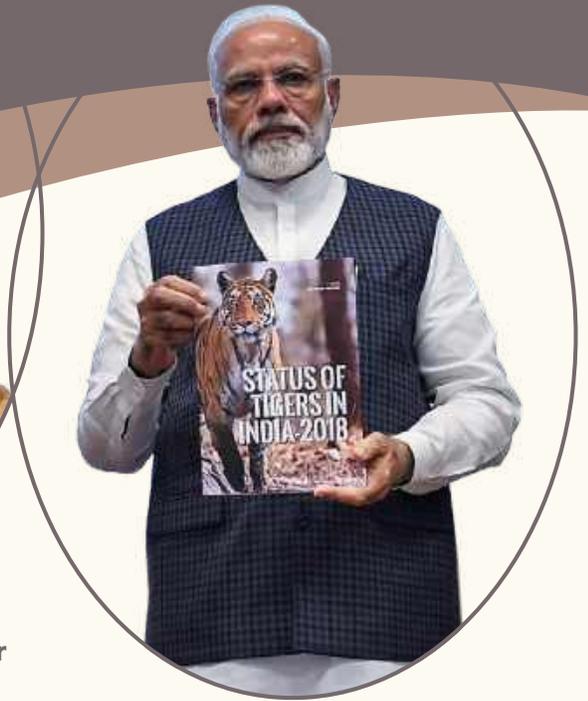
robust population estimates. The **2022 cycle surveyed 20 states, covering over 6,41,000 km on foot, and identified 3,080 individual tigers, contributing to an estimated total of 3,682 tigers in India.** By providing an evidence-based assessment, AITE guides strategic conservation planning, helps mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and strengthens India's role as the global leader in tiger conservation.

All India Tiger Estimation



World's largest camera-trap survey



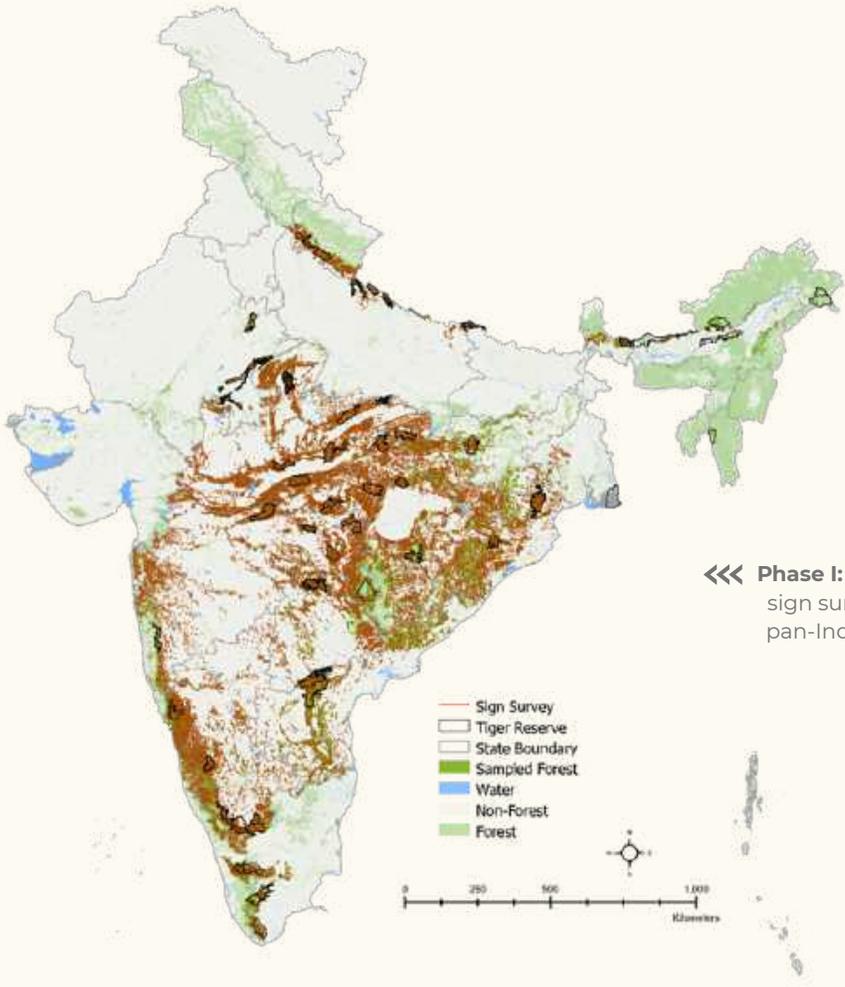


Hon'ble PM released the tiger numbers in 2018 and 2022

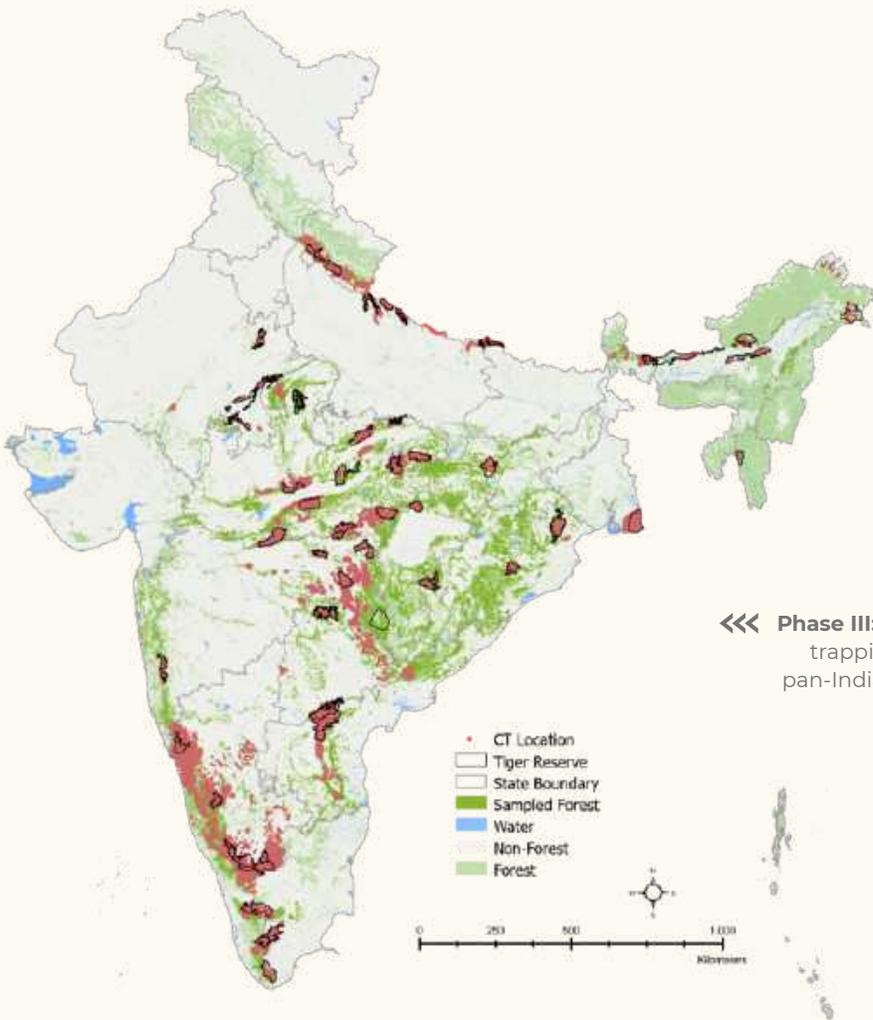
“By protecting the tiger, we protect the entire ecosystem and the ecological services, which are equally crucial for the well-being of human beings...In fact, the benefits from tiger conservation are enormous but intangible...I would like to emphasize that conservation of tigers is not a choice. It is an imperative.”

–PM Narendra Modi



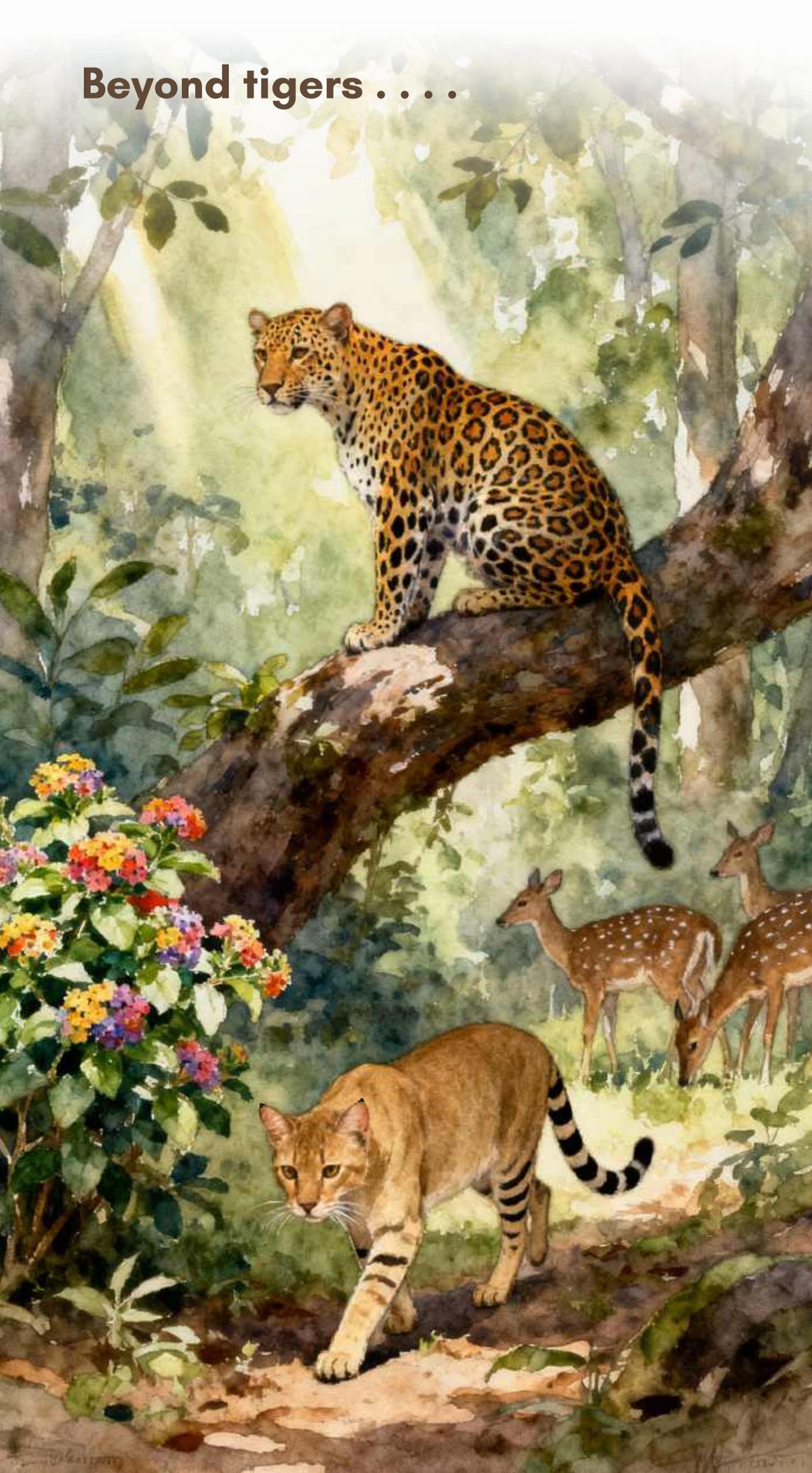


<<< **Phase I:** Carnivore
 sign survey effort
 pan-India in 2022
 cycle



<<< **Phase III:** Camera
 trapping effort
 pan-India in 2022
 cycle

Beyond tigers



Plant Invasions and restoration priorities in India

In the Status of Tigers, Co-predators & Prey in India, 2022 report, the chapter on “Plant Invasions and Restoration Priorities in India” highlights the growing threat of invasive plant species across tiger habitats. This represents the **first pan-India assessment of plant invasions within tiger landscapes**, recognizing that invasive species are rapidly altering ecosystem structure, suppressing native flora, and reducing prey resources vital for tiger survival. To map the extent and severity of invasion risk, the study applied **spatial modelling and habitat-level analysis across all major tiger-bearing regions**.

The key findings show that a **significant portion of India’s forests is already invaded or highly vulnerable to invasive species expansion, especially near disturbed and fragmented habitats**. The analysis **identifies current hotspots as well as landscapes where invasion pressure is expected to grow in the coming years**. It further emphasizes that degraded ecosystems recover slowly and native biodiversity declines most where invasive species dominate, highlighting the urgency for efficient monitoring and targeted restoration.

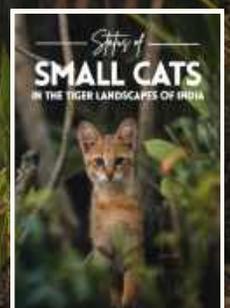
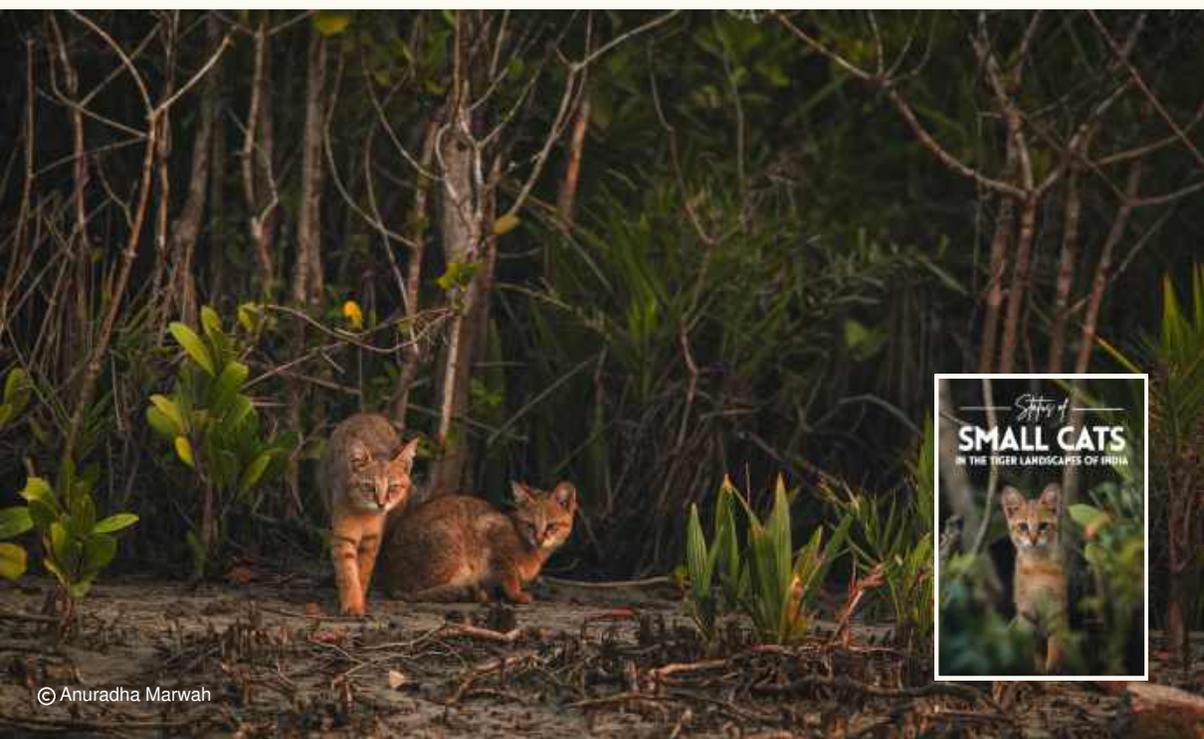
The conservation implications are substantial: rising tiger numbers alone will not ensure long-term security unless habitats remain productive, diverse, and connected. The report **recommends a prioritized restoration approach that first safeguards less-invaded, high-value habitats while simultaneously rehabilitating heavily affected areas using native species regeneration and community-supported management**.





Status of Ungulates in the Tiger Habitats of India

For the first time, in 2022, India conducted the nationwide assessment of ungulates, as part of the All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) exercise. **Using line transect surveys, camera trap data, and indirect field evidence**, the assessment covered four major tiger-bearing landscapes - the Shivalik–Gangetic Plains, Central India–Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, and the North East Hills–Brahmaputra floodplains, including the Sundarbans. The findings reveal that the **spotted deer (chital) is the most abundant deer species across India's forests**. The report emphasizes the **need for secure, well-protected habitats that can sustain healthy prey populations, ensuring a stable prey–predator balance vital for ecosystem health**. It further highlights habitat restoration and prey augmentation as key strategies for reviving tiger populations, particularly in regions where both prey density and tiger numbers are low.



Status of Leopards in India

Leopards, one of India's most adaptable big cats, are monitored alongside tigers under the All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) exercise. This comprehensive, science-based assessment combines sign surveys, line transects, and camera trap data to produce accurate population estimates. **According to the 2022 assessment, India's leopard population in tiger-bearing forests is estimated at around 13,874 ($\pm 1,258$) individuals.** Among the states, **Madhya Pradesh supports the highest number with 3,907 (± 215) leopards, followed by Maharashtra with 1,985 (± 122) and Karnataka with 1,879 (± 261).** The Central India and Eastern Ghats landscape continues to serve as a major stronghold, hosting the largest share of the country's leopard population. Overall, leopards are distributed across 13 Indian states, occupying nearly 70% of the total leopard range in the country.



Status of Small Cats in the Tiger Landscapes of India

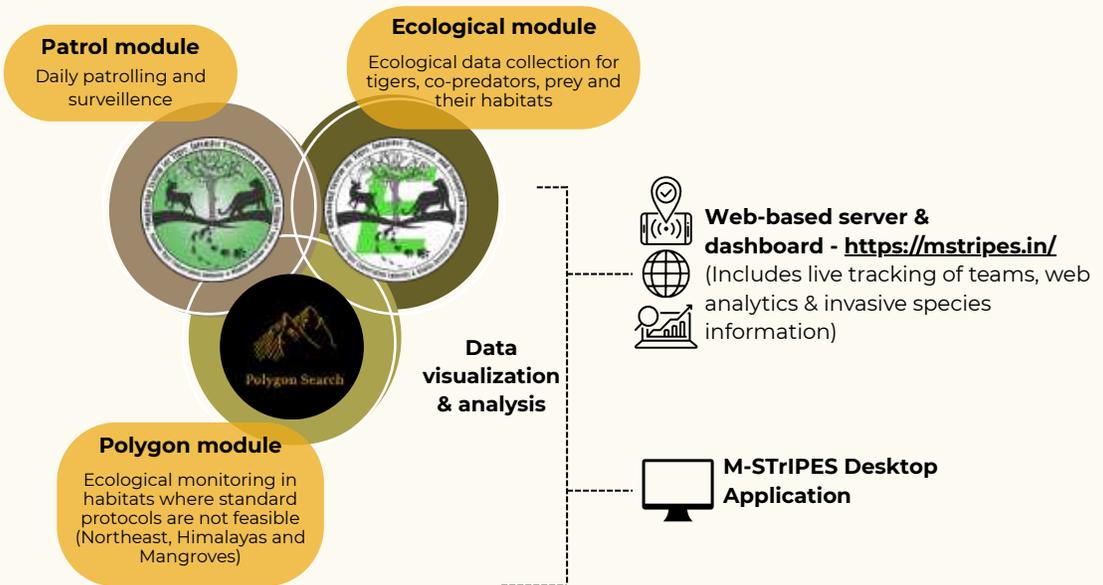
The report marks the first nation-wide assessment of nine small wild cat species across India's tiger-bearing forests. The study draws on extensive camera-trap data, sign surveys and occupancy modelling, from the tiger-estimation exercise (2018 and 2022). Key findings reveal that the **Jungle cat is the most widely distributed small felid, occupying an estimated ~96,275 km², followed by the Rusty-spotted cat (~70,075 km²) and the Leopard cat (~32,800 km²).** The report further underlines that **habitat generalists tend to tolerate moderate human disturbances, whereas specialists such as the Fishing cat, Clouded leopard, Marbled cat and Asiatic golden cat are far more vulnerable.** The findings highlight that protected areas and tiger landscapes play a pivotal role as refuges for these lesser-known carnivores and emphasise the need to integrate small cat conservation into landscape-level planning.

M-STrIPES

The **Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES)** is an innovative Law Enforcement Monitoring (LEM) tool developed to strengthen wildlife conservation efforts in India. It was developed and launched by the NTCA and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in 2011, in response to the growing global need for advanced monitoring systems to combat illegal wildlife trade and resource depletion, .

The platform was designed to address existing challenges in wildlife protection, where data generated by earlier programs were often ad hoc and not structured for informed decision-making. By integrating modern technology, M-STrIPES supports field managers and patrolling staff in collecting, managing, and analyzing ecological and protection-related data in real time.

Data collection through **Android mobile applications**



The M-STrIPES Android application represents a major step forward in integrating technology with wildlife protection. By enabling patrolling staff to record and upload data directly from smartphones, the app ensures real-time information flow from the field to central databases.

Live Tracking of Field Teams >>>
Monitoring online patrols for assisting on managerial actions and guidance



Designed specifically for India's tiger conservation landscape, M-STripES addresses the country's unique ecological and management challenges. However, its versatile and open-source design allows it to be adapted for use in any wildlife habitat globally. The system integrates data collected through mobile applications, GPS devices, and observation diaries, creating a comprehensive, nested database for monitoring and decision-making. **By combining spatial and statistical analysis, M-STripES provides valuable insights into patrolling efficiency, ecological patterns, and threats to wildlife.** This data-driven, evidence-based approach has become **instrumental in strengthening strategic planning and adaptive management in conservation**, allowing authorities to modify their strategies in response to real-time field conditions and emerging threats.







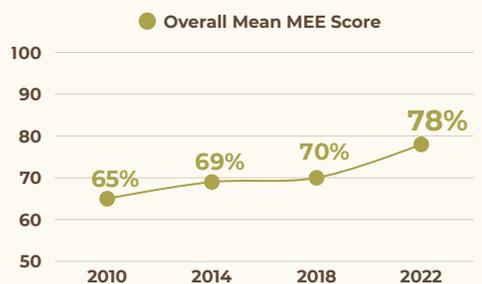
MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION OF TIGER RESERVES

Launched in 2006, the Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) is a **scientific framework designed to assess how well India's tiger reserves are managed, both ecologically and administratively.** Adapted from the IUCN framework, MEE evaluates reserves through six core elements and 33 indicators covering context, planning, inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. The initiative, led by the NTCA, promotes accountability, identifies management gaps, and supports evidence-based conservation decisions.



Components of MEE:

Evaluation is done on the basis of IUCN's Framework for Assessing Management Effectiveness



Over the years, MEE has evolved into a vital tool for improving protected area management. From the first cycle in 2006, which covered 28 reserves, to the fifth cycle in 2022, which evaluated 51 reserves, the process has driven steady progress. India's tiger reserves have demonstrated remarkable advancement- in 2022, 12 reserves earned "Excellent" ratings, and the average MEE score rose to 78%, reflecting enhanced management, climate resilience, and landscape-level planning. MEE continues to guide policy, funding, and conservation strategies, ensuring that India's tiger habitats are managed more effectively and sustainably for the future.

ECONOMIC VALUATION OF TIGER RESERVES

The NTCA, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), undertook a pioneering exercise to estimate the economic valuation of India's tiger reserves. This initiative **aimed to highlight the wide range of ecosystem services these reserves provide, beyond their role in tiger conservation. These include vital benefits such as carbon sequestration, water purification, soil conservation, nutrient cycling, gene-pool protection, ecotourism, and livelihood generation for local communities.**

The **first phase of the study (2013–2015) assessed six tiger reserves**, including Corbett, Kanha, Kaziranga, Periyar, Ranthambore, and Sundarbans, revealing that each reserve contributes ecosystem benefits valued between ₹30,000 and ₹1,00,000 per hectare annually, demonstrating the immense natural wealth these protected areas sustain. Building on these insights, the **second phase (2016–2019) expanded the study to ten additional reserves** such as Bandipur, Dudhwa, Melghat, and Panna. The combined economic value of these tiger reserves was estimated at an impressive ₹5.96 lakh crore.

This landmark valuation exercise underscores that **tiger reserves are not merely wildlife habitats but also powerful natural assets delivering substantial economic, social, and environmental returns.** By quantifying their contribution to ecosystem stability and human well-being, the NTCA–IIFM study strengthens the case for sustained investment in wildlife conservation and reinforces the view that protecting tigers means safeguarding India's natural capital and ecological future.





SECURITY AUDIT OF TIGER RESERVES

The NTCA has introduced a comprehensive Security Audit mechanism to **assess and strengthen the protection framework of India's tiger reserves**. This initiative, developed in collaboration with the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), aims to systematically **evaluate the preparedness and efficiency of each reserve in addressing threats such as poaching, illegal wildlife trade, encroachment, and habitat degradation**. Conducted as part of the legally mandated Tiger Conservation Plans under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the audit examines key aspects of park management including **threat assessment, patrolling efficiency, communication networks, field infrastructure, intelligence systems, and staff capacity**. The process also ensures that site-specific security strategies are aligned with ecological requirements and the socio-economic context of surrounding communities.

The Security Audit is carried out in phases across tiger reserves, with multidisciplinary teams conducting field inspections, interacting with frontline staff, and reviewing protection records and anti-poaching measures. **Recommendations from these audits are used to enhance surveillance systems, optimize resource allocation, and improve the safety of field personnel**. Through this framework, the NTCA has created a robust mechanism that not only safeguards tigers but also strengthens the overall security and management integrity of India's protected area network.



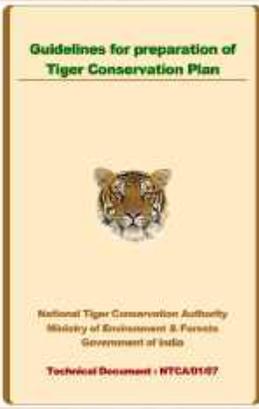


STANDARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS/GUIDELINES FOR TIGER RESERVE MANAGEMENT

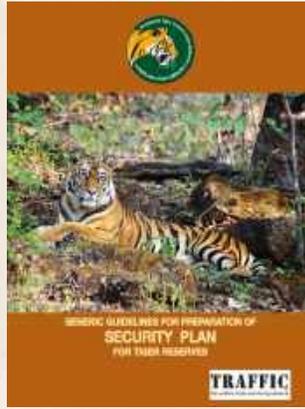
The NTCA has developed a comprehensive set of **Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs) to ensure uniformity, transparency, and efficiency in managing tiger reserves and handling field situations.** These SOPs serve as essential guidelines for state forest departments and frontline staff, covering a wide range of areas including monitoring tiger deaths, managing straying or conflict tigers, dealing with orphaned cubs, addressing poaching incidents, and handling rescue and rehabilitation operations. The protocols are rooted in scientific principles and best management practices, ensuring timely response, proper documentation, and coordination among agencies.

In addition to SOPs, the NTCA has also issued a range of **technical guidelines and field manuals that support scientific, standardized management across all tiger reserves.** These include detailed protocols for tiger population estimation (camera-trapping, line transects, and data analysis), field identification guides for tigers, co-predators, and prey species, as well as manuals on tiger reserve evaluation, monitoring, and reporting formats. NTCA has also developed guidelines for eco-tourism management, conflict mitigation, and corridor conservation, helping states integrate conservation, community welfare, and sustainable development. Together, these tools equip forest staff, researchers, and managers with clear, practical guidance to implement Project Tiger effectively on the ground.





Guidelines for preparation of Tiger Conservation Plan, 2007 & 2014



Generic Guidelines for Preparation of Security Plan for Tiger Reserves, 2009



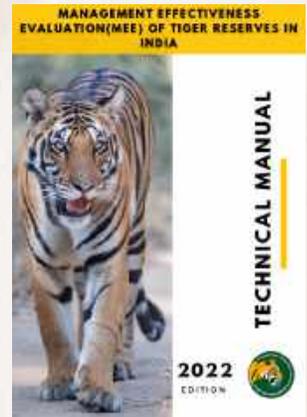
Protocol for Security Audit of Tiger Reserves, 2017



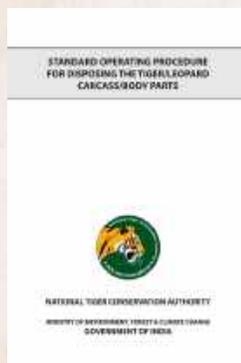
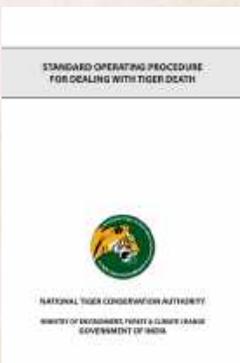
Phase III Camera Trapping Protocol, 2018



Forest Fire Audit Protocol for Tiger Reserves, 2022



Technical Manual on MEE of Tiger Reserves, 2022



Standard Operating Procedures and Tiger Safari Guidelines, 2019



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR TIGER CONSERVATION

India is actively collaborating with countries around the world to safeguard tiger populations and their habitats. Through **scientific research partnerships, technological cooperation, and coordinated conservation planning**, India works to strengthen protection measures both within and beyond its borders. These efforts include sharing expertise in habitat restoration, monitoring techniques, and strategies to manage human-wildlife conflict.

A major focus of India's global collaboration is **tackling illegal wildlife trade and ensuring the security of transboundary tiger landscapes**. Joint patrolling, anti-poaching operations, and intelligence exchange help protect tigers that move across international boundaries. By supporting both **recovery programs and knowledge exchange** on big-cat conservation, India is reinforcing its leadership in global wildlife protection and contributing to the long-term survival of tigers and other wildlife worldwide.

Russia

Scientific Cooperation agreement in the field of camera trap data management and processing



Indo-Russia working sub group for the conservation of tigers and leopards



Nepal

Trans boundary biodiversity conservation



Bangladesh

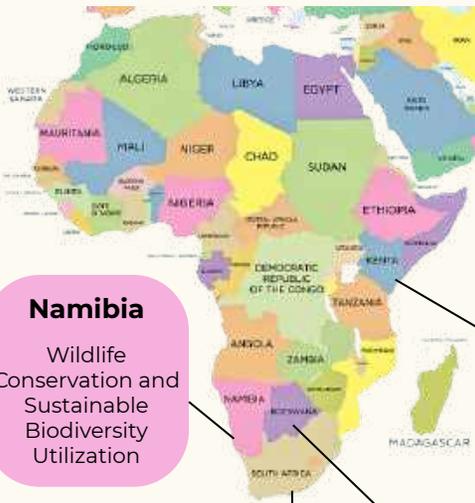
Conservation of the Sundarban



Myanmar

Cooperation on Combating timber Trafficking and Conservation of Tigers and Other Wildlife





Namibia
Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Biodiversity Utilization

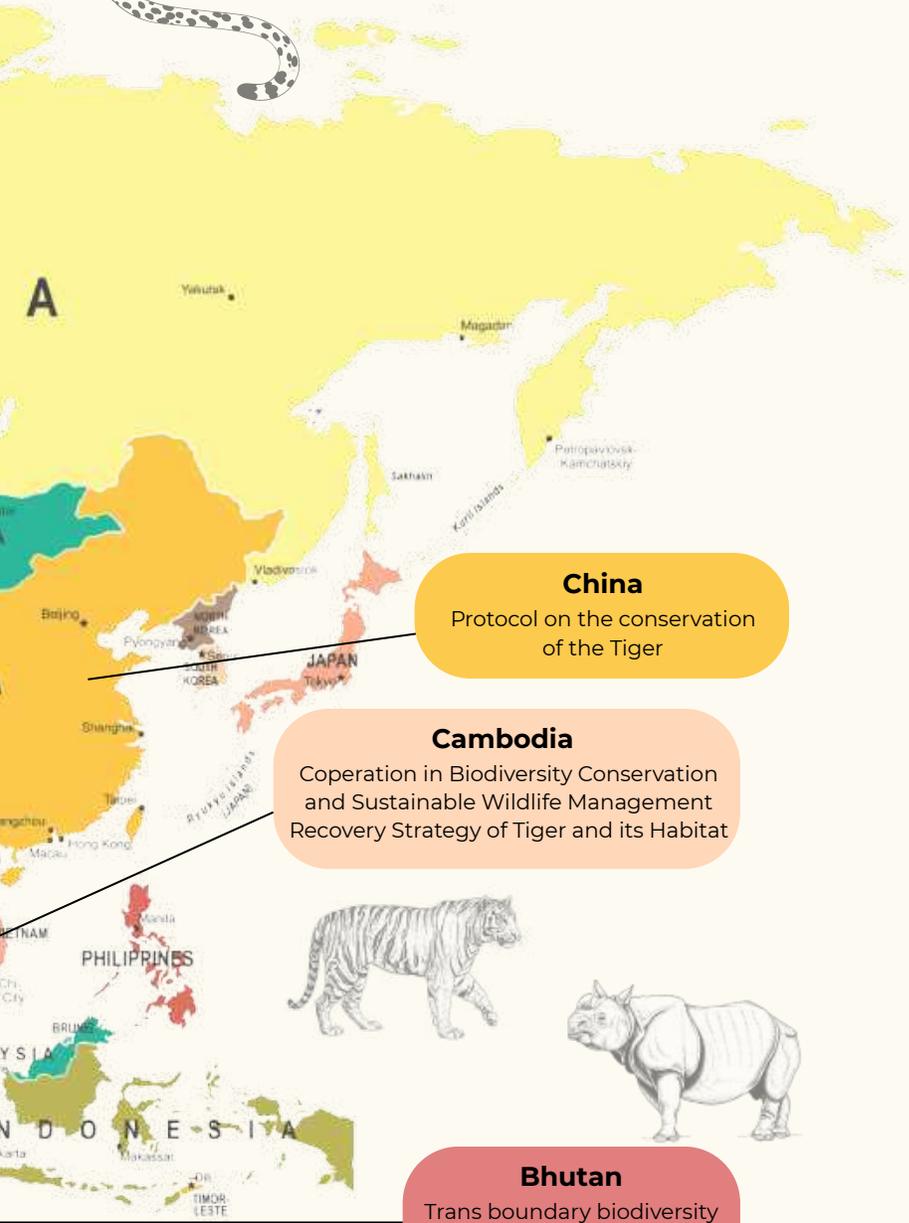
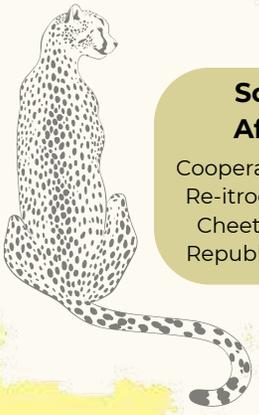


Guatemala
Conservation of the Tiger and the Jaguar

Kenya
Cooperation in the field of Wildlife Conservation and Management

South Africa
Cooperation in the Re-introduction of Cheetah in the Republic of India

Botswana
Cooperation in the field of Wildlife Conservation and Management



China
Protocol on the conservation of the Tiger

Cambodia
Cooperation in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Wildlife Management Recovery Strategy of Tiger and its Habitat

Bhutan
Trans boundary biodiversity conservation with a focus on tiger and rhinoceros





BRINGING BACK THE CHEETAH TO INDIA



Project Cheetah represents India's pioneering initiative to reintroduce the cheetah to its historical range and revive open natural ecosystems. After the species was declared extinct in India in 1952, the vision of bringing the cheetah back gained momentum, culminating in the arrival of the first batch of **eight cheetahs from Namibia to Kuno National Park in September 2022, followed by twelve more from South Africa in February 2023.**

The project aims to **establish a viable cheetah metapopulation in India, allowing this apex predator to reclaim its ecological role while contributing to global conservation efforts.**

The journey so far reflects a carefully planned scientific rewilding process. Cheetahs underwent soft release inside large closed natural areas, to enable acclimatisation to Indian climatic and ecological conditions, before being released into free-ranging environments. Significant progress has been achieved: as of **December 2025, India has recorded 30 cheetahs, including 19 Indian-born cubs, and more than half of the females have successfully bred.**



Survival rates and hunting success in Kuno have been comparable to other international cheetah reintroduction efforts, with recorded wild prey kills confirming successful adaptation to the Indian landscape. **Three cheetahs have also been translocated to the Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, marking the expansion of the cheetah metapopulation beyond Kuno, and Botswana has further strengthened Project Cheetah by formally gifting eight cheetahs to India.** As cheetahs return to their ancestral landscapes, they are reviving the ecological balance of India's grasslands and savannahs, reaffirming the nation's commitment to global wildlife conservation.



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR BIG CAT CONSERVATION

India's five decades of experience with Project Tiger laid the foundation for the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**. Drawing on lessons in scientific monitoring (like intensive camera-trap surveys), creation of protected-area networks and corridors, strong legal frameworks, and community-based conservation, India recognized that similar tools were needed globally for all big cats. Building on this success, the idea of a worldwide platform for big cat range and non-range countries was first floated by the Prime Minister in 2019 and formally launched as IBCA in April 2023 during the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger.

The International Big Cat Alliance now aims to conserve seven major big cat species- tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma, through a shared, science-based approach. Its core goals include **stopping illegal wildlife trade and poaching, conserving and restoring natural habitats and corridors, mobilising financial and technical resources, and strengthening global cooperation in research, capacity building, and standard operating procedures for big cat protection.**





ART FOR CONSERVATION

India's tribal communities are deeply intertwined with the nation's ecological and cultural legacy. For generations, they have protected forests, safeguarded wildlife, and preserved traditional knowledge through lifestyles built on respect, balance, and sustainability. Their intimate understanding of nature, whether in managing forest resources or interpreting wildlife behavior, makes them essential partners in conservation.

To celebrate this timeless connection, the annual art exhibition "**Silent Conversation: From Margins to the Centre**" has been organized every year since 2023 by the Sankala Foundation in collaboration with the NTCA. The exhibition brings indigenous voices and artistic expressions into the mainstream conservation narrative, showcasing how cultural heritage and wildlife protection go hand in hand. It also advocates for sustainable alternative livelihoods, ensuring that tribal communities continue to thrive while reducing forest dependency and lowering human-wildlife conflict.

This initiative emphasizes a vital truth: **the future of India's tigers and forests is inseparable from the well-being and empowerment of the tribal communities who protect them.**

First Edition — Nov 2023 | IHC, New Delhi

- Inaugurated by Hon'ble President; showcased 134 artworks from 30 tiger reserves.
- Artists met the President and participated in cultural exposure visits.

Second Edition — Oct 2024 | IHC, New Delhi

- Expanded to include art from national parks, WLS & community reserves.
- Displayed 300+ artworks from 22 protected areas.

2B Third Edition — Oct 2024 | RBCC, New Delhi

- Artist-in-residence program at Rashtrapati Bhavan for 12-15 artists.
- New artworks created and exhibited on-site.

Fourth Edition — Oct 2025 | IHC, New Delhi

- Featured major tribal art forms (Gond, Warli, Bhil, Sohrai, etc.) with wide community participation.
- Included tribal cultural evening and national conference on tribal arts & conservation.







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