



Puducherry ENVIS Hub

Host Centre: Puducherry Pollution Control Committee

Funded by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

Government of India, New Delhi

International

TIGER DAY

THE NATIONAL

ANIMAL OF INDIA

29th July, 2021

The magnificent tiger, *Panthera tigris* is a striped animal. It has a thick yellow coat of fur with dark stripes. The combination of grace, strength, agility and enormous power has earned the tiger its pride of place as the national animal of India.

Theme:

**"Their survival
is in our hands"**



TIGER DAY: HISTORY

International Tiger Day or Global Tiger Day is celebrated each year on July 29 as per the decision taken at the Saint Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation that was signed in 2010.

The day is celebrated to boost awareness about the need for tiger conservation and 13 tiger-range countries decided to double their number of tigers by 2022 at the St Petersburg Summit.

WHY SAVE TIGERS ?

The presence of tiger symbolizes a healthy ecosystem as it is an umbrella species. Tiger is symbol of wilderness and well-being of the ecosystem. By conserving and saving tigers the entire wilderness of ecosystem is conserved. In nature, barring human beings and their domesticate, rest of the ecosystem is wild. Hence conserving wilderness is important and crucial to maintain the life support system. So, saving tiger amounts to saving the ecosystem which is crucial for man's own survival.

WHY DO WE NEED AN INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY?

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), 95% of the tiger population has been lost from the beginning of the 20th century. There are only 3900 tigers in the wild now in the whole world.

Last year, the whole nation celebrated when the Tiger census was revealed highlighting India's achievement of nearly 33% increase in the tiger population.

However, there is still a need to create immense amount of awareness around tiger conservation and build a safe natural habitat for this incredible species.

The main reasons for the loss of tiger population is poaching, climate change, and the destruction of their natural habitat.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TIGERS IN INDIA?

Tigers occupy an important place in the Indian culture. Since ages, it has been a symbol of magnificence, power, beauty and fierceness and has been associated with bravery and valor. The tiger also has a significant place in Hindu mythology as the vehicle of Goddess Durga. In olden times, hunting of tigers was considered to be one of the highest acts of bravery by kings and noblemen.

The tiger is a unique animal which plays a pivotal role in the health and diversity of an ecosystem. It is a top predator and is at the apex of the food chain. Therefore the presence of tigers in the forest is an indicator of the well-being of the ecosystem. Protection of tigers in forests protects habitats of several other species. Indirect benefits include protection of rivers and other water sources, prevention of soil erosion and improvement of ecological services like pollination, water table retention etc. The absence of this top predator is an indication that its ecosystem is not sufficiently protected. Tigers are both a Flagship and Umbrella species. As a Flagship species they are important for conservation and as Umbrella species, conservation of tigers leads to conservation of other species. Tigers and high intensity biotic disturbances such as poaching and stealing of kills do not go together. If the tigers in the wild have to survive, it is imperative that other species of wild animals that are directly or indirectly a part of the food chain must also thrive. Therefore, the survival of the tiger is an important yardstick to measure the existence of a healthy forest ecosystem.

What are the Indian and International laws that protect tigers?

Indian Tiger is an endangered animal and is listed in the Schedule I of **the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**. This act gives it protection against hunting/poaching and trade for skins, bones and body parts. Any person who commits such an offence is punishable with an imprisonment of not less than three years extending up to seven years along with a fine of not less than fifty thousand rupees which may extend up to two lakh rupees. In the event of a second or subsequent conviction he can receive imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years and a fine which shall be not less than five lakh rupees and can vary up to a maximum of fifty lakh rupees.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) presently ratified by over 160 countries, makes international trade in tiger parts illegal. India has been a signatory of this convention since the year 1975.



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY / PROJECT TIGER

The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act.



The National Tiger Conservation Authority has been fulfilling its mandate within the ambit of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for strengthening tiger conservation in the country by retaining an oversight through advisories/normative guidelines, based on appraisal of tiger status, ongoing conservation initiatives and recommendations of specially constituted Committees. 'Project Tiger' is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Environment, Forests and Climate Change, providing funding support to tiger range States, for in-situ conservation of tigers in designated tiger reserves, and has put the endangered tiger on an assured path of recovery by saving it from extinction, as revealed by the recent findings of the All India tiger estimation using the refined methodology.

Objective of the NTCA

- ✓ Providing statutory authority to Project Tiger so that compliance of its directives become legal.
- ✓ Fostering accountability of Center-State in management of Tiger Reserves, by providing a basis for MoU with States within our federal structure.
- ✓ Providing for an oversight by Parliament.
- ✓ Addressing livelihood interests of local people in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves.

Power and Functions of the NTCA

- ✓ Powers and functions of the National Tiger Conservation Authority as prescribed under section 380 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006 are as under:-
- ✓ To approve the tiger conservation plan prepared by the State Government under sub-section (3) of section 38V of this Act;
- ✓ Evaluate and assess various aspects of sustainable ecology and disallow any ecologically unsustainable land use such as, mining, industry and other projects within the tiger reserves;
- ✓ Lay down normative standards for tourism activities and guidelines for project tiger from time to time for tiger conservation in the buffer and core area of tiger reserves and ensure their due compliance;
- ✓ Approve, co-ordinate research and monitoring on tiger, co-predators, prey habitat, related ecological and socio-economic parameters and their evaluation;



- ✓ Provide for management focus and measures for addressing conflicts of men and wild animal and to emphasize on co-existence in forest areas outside the National Parks, sanctuaries or tiger reserve, in the working plan code.
- ✓ Provide information on protection measures including future conservation plan, estimation of population of tiger and its natural prey species, status of habitats, disease surveillance, mortality survey, patrolling, reports on untoward happenings and such other management aspects as it may deem fit including future plan conservation.
- ✓ Ensure that the tiger reserves and areas linking one protected area or tiger reserve with another protected area or tiger reserve are not diverted for ecologically unsustainable uses, except in public interest and with the approval of the National Board for Wild Life and on the advice of the Tiger Conservation Authority.
- ✓ Facilitate and support the tiger reserve management in the State for biodiversity conservation initiatives through eco-development and people's participation as per approved management plans and to support similar initiatives in adjoining areas consistent with the Central and State laws.
- ✓ Ensure critical support including scientific, information technology and legal support for better implementation of the tiger conservation plan.
- ✓ Facilitate ongoing capacity building programme for skill development of officers and staff of tiger reserves, and
- ✓ Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act with regard to conservation of tigers and their habitat

REASONS BEHIND THE DECLINING POPULATION OF TIGERS

- ✓ **Poaching and illegal trade:** For traditional Chinese medicines, tigers face the problem of poaching as there is a demand for every part of the body of the tiger. In illegal wildlife trades, they keep high prices.

- ✔ **Habitat loss:** Nowadays and with the increasing population forest are becoming less in numbers. Clearing of forests for several reasons like agriculture, industries, etc. made a loss of around 93% of the natural habitats of tigers.
- ✔ **Climate Change:** With the rise of sea level due to climate change lead to wiping out of Sundarbans one of the habitats of Royal Bengal Tigers.
- ✔ Several diseases are also the key factor. Several animals die and there is no way to ascertain the cause of their death. Certain diseases spread epidemic like Feline Panleucopenia, tuberculosis, etc.
- ✔ The study of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR) says that the tiger population in the park shown a loss of genetic diversity over the years.
- ✔ Degradation of Habitats: Big cats want secure and disturbance-free habitat to survive but due to several developmental activities in the landscape of the protected areas (PAs) pose a big threat to tigers.
- ✔ Man-animal conflict also affects the population of big cats.
- ✔ Lack of protection infrastructure.
- ✔ Increasing tourism day by day is also one of the factors for the decline in tiger numbers.



UNIQUE FACTS ABOUT TIGERS

1.

A tiger's roar can be heard as far as three kilometers away

6.

Tigers are good swimmers!

2.

Tiger cubs are born blind and attain clear vision after 6-8 weeks of birth.

7.

Tigers are the largest wild cats in the world and can weigh up to 363 kilograms

3.

The average life span of a tiger in the wild is about 11 years.

8.

Tigers can climb trees under stress!

4.

Tigers live alone and aggressively scent-mark large territories to keep their rivals away

9.

No two tigers have the same stripes.

5.

At full speed, tigers can reach up to 65km/h

10.

There were eight tiger subspecies at one time, but three became extinct during the 20th century.

