



## Tiger Safari in Tiger Reserve

**For Prelims:** [Supreme Court](#), Tiger Safari at Pakhrau, [Corbett Tiger Reserve](#), [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#), [National Parks](#), [Wildlife Sanctuaries](#), [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#), [Tiger Safari](#), [National Board for Wild Life](#), [Central Zoo Authority \(CZA\)](#), [Rajaji Tiger Reserve](#), Nahargarh Biological Park, [Asiatic lions](#), [Royal Bengal tigers](#), [panthers](#), hyenas, [wolves](#), [deer](#), [crocodiles](#), [sloth bears](#), Himalayan black bears,

**For Mains:** Significance of establishment of a Tiger Safari in the Buffer zone of Corbett Tiger Reserve.

**Source:** [IE](#)

### Why in News?

The [Supreme Court](#) expressed inclination towards approving the establishment of a **Tiger Safari at Pakhrau, Uttarakhand** in the **buffer area of [Corbett Tiger Reserve \(CTR\)](#)**.

- The court emphasised that safari parks are intended only for local tigers that are injured, conflicted, or orphaned, and not those sourced from zoos.
- The court gave the [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#) a three-month deadline to conclude its investigation into alleged irregularities within CTR.

### Note

- In its interim order related to the case challenging the [Forest \(Conservation\) Amendment Act, 2023](#), the **Supreme Court** stated that the **creation of zoos or safaris by any government or authority must receive final approval from the apex court.**

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# TIGER

Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) is the National animal of India.

## Subspecies of Tiger

- \* The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- \* The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

## Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas



## Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

- Found only in 13 Tiger Range countries- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

## Protection Status

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- WPA 1972: Schedule I

## Threats

- Habitat loss
- Poaching and illegal trade
- Human-Wildlife conflict

## Conservation Efforts

- International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA):** For conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma (launched by India)
- Tx2 campaign:** Launched by WWF; stands for 'Tiger times 2' signaling the goal to double the tiger population by 2022
- National Tiger Conservation authority (NTCA):** Constituted under the WPA, 1972
- Project Tiger:** Launched in 1973
- Tiger Census:** Every 4 years

## Tigers In India

- India has the largest population
  - As of 2022, India has 3167 tigers
  - Largest population has been found in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape
- Tiger Reserves:** India now has 53 tiger reserves
  - Ranipur in UP is the latest
  - Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh) is the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area)



## What Does a Tiger Safari Really Mean?

- About:**
  - A tiger safari is an expedition undertaken to observe tigers in their natural habitat.
  - These safaris typically take place in protected areas like **national parks** and **wildlife sanctuaries**, particularly in India, which is home to over **70%** of the **world's wild tiger population**.
- Definition:**
  - The **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** does not define **"tiger safari"**.
    - The act mandates that "no construction of **commercial tourist lodges, hotels, zoos** and **safari parks** shall be undertaken inside a sanctuary except with the prior approval of the **National Board for Wild Life** constituted under the Act.
- Establishment:**
  - The concept of a tiger safari was introduced in the **2012 Guidelines for Tourism** by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, allowing for such establishments in the **buffer areas of tiger reserves**.
  - NTCA guidelines of 2016** permitted the establishment of **"Tiger Safaris"** in **buffer and fringe areas** of tiger reserves for **injured, conflicted, or orphaned tigers**, stipulating

that no tigers should be obtained from zoos.

- **In 2019, the NTCA permitted** animals to be sourced from zoos for tiger safari, granting the [Central Zoo Authority \(CZA\)](#) the authority to select these animals.

## What are the Needs and Concerns Related to Building a Tiger Safari in the Forest?

### ▪ Need:

- The **2012 NTCA guidelines** supported safari parks as a strategy to **alleviate the tourism pressure within tiger reserves**, which can stress wildlife.
- There is resistance to transferring **animals that are not suited for the wild**, like those that are **injured, orphaned, or caught in conflicts, to distant zoos**.
  - Safari parks provide a way to **keep such animals captive within** their natural environment.
- Buffer areas were designated to accommodate **activities supporting the livelihood** and development **needs of local communities**.
  - Safari parks contribute to **generating income** and fostering **local support for tiger conservation**.

### ▪ Concerns

- **Housing zoo tigers** or other captive animals within tiger habitats poses a **risk of disease transmission to wild tigers** and other wildlife.
- Keeping **captive animals** in different locations doesn't change their captive status. Creating **safari parks for "rescued" tigers** in reserves might focus more on the **welfare of individual tigers** than on conserving the species, which could disturb natural habitats.
  - The concept of **displaying "rescued" tigers in safari parks** diverges from the norm of keeping distressed animals away from public view.
  - The **2016 guidelines** were cautious about this policy shift, mandating assessment by the **NTCA** for every "recovered/treated animal" before placement in safari parks.
- The Supreme Court held that the **NTCA's** interpretation of **tiger safaris** as essentially **zoos within tiger reserves** contradicts the purpose of tiger conservation.
- Efforts to **reduce tourist crowds** around tigers in reserves **have often failed**, with new safari routes **attracting even more visitors**.

## Corbett Tiger Reserve

### ▪ About:

- It is located in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The [Project Tiger](#) was launched in 1973 in **Corbett National Park (first National Park of India)**, which is part of **Corbett Tiger Reserve**.
  - The national park was established in **1936** as **Hailey National Park** to protect the endangered Bengal tiger.
- The **core area** forms the **Corbett National Park** while the **buffer contains reserve forests** as well as the **Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- The entire area of the reserve is mountainous and falls in the **Shivalik and Outer Himalaya geological provinces**.
- **Ramganga, Sonanadi, Mandal, Palain** and **Kosi** are the major rivers flowing through the Reserve.

### ▪ Other Major Protected Areas of Uttarakhand:

- [Nanda Devi National Park](#).
- Valley of Flowers National Park.
  - Valley of Flowers National Park and Nanda Devi National Park together are a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).
- [Rajaji National Park](#).
- [Gangotri National Park](#).

## Rajaji National Park

### ▪ About:

- **Location:** Haridwar (Uttarakhand), along the foothills of the Shivalik range.
- **Background:** Three sanctuaries in the Uttarakhand i.e. **Rajaji, Motichur and Chila were amalgamated** into a large protected area and **named Rajaji National Park** in the year 1983 after the famous freedom fighter **C. Rajgopalachari**; popularly known as **“Rajaji”**.
- **Features:**
  - This area is the North Western Limit of habitat of **Asian elephants**.
  - Forest types include sal forests, riverine forests, broad-leaved mixed forests, scrubland and grassy.
  - It was declared a **Tiger Reserve** in **2015**.
  - It is home to the **Van Gujjars** tribes in the winters.

## Way Forward

- **Addressing Disease Transmission Risks:** Implement stringent health screening and quarantine protocols for captive animals before introducing them into tiger habitats.
- **Balancing Welfare and Conservation:** Develop guidelines and management plans that prioritise species conservation and minimise disruptions to natural habitats while also considering the welfare of individual animals.
- **Enhancing Oversight and Evaluation:** Strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, building on the cautious **approach outlined in the 2016 guidelines**. Ensure that the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) conducts** thorough assessments of every "recovered/treated animal" before approving their placement in safari parks.
- **Aligning with Conservation Goals:** Foster dialogue between conservation organisations, government agencies, and legal authorities to ensure that policies and practices support long-term conservation efforts while upholding ethical standards.
- **Sustainable Tourism Management:** Implement **sustainable tourism practices** to reduce the impact of tourist crowds on tiger reserves. **Explore options** such as **visitor quotas, diversified tourist activities**, and improved infrastructure to manage visitor traffic more effectively.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims:

**Q1. Consider the following pairs: (2013)**

	<b>National Park</b>	<b>River flowing through Park</b>
1.	Corbett National Park	Ganga
2.	Kaziranga National Park	Manas
3.	Silent Valley National Park	Kaveri

**Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?**

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) None

**Ans: (d)**

**Q.2 Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under “Critical Tiger Habitat”? (2020)**

- (a) Corbett
- (b) Ranthambore
- (c) Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam



(d) Sundarbans

Ans: C

**Mains:**

**Q.** "Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation' to the environment." Comment with relevant illustrations. **(2018)**

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