



## Tiger Deaths Raise Concerns in Nilgiris Biodiversity

**For Prelims:** [Biosphere Reserve](#), [Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve](#), [Tiger](#)

**For Mains:** Significance of Tiger Conservation, Related initiatives

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

### Why in News?

The Nilgiris District in Tamil Nadu is home to a rich biodiversity and a large population of [tigers](#). However, in the past two months, **10 tigers have died** in the district due to various reasons.

- This has raised concerns among conservationists and officials about the welfare and survival of the big cats.

### What are the Reasons for Tiger Deaths in Nilgiris?

- **High Density of Tigers:**
  - The **high density of tigers in the [Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole](#) complex** of the [Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve](#) is pushing populations into the surrounding habitats in the **Mukurthi National Park, Nilgiris and Gudalur forest divisions** leading to more **negative human-animal interactions**.
  - The rise in tiger numbers puts pressure on prey species like **spotted deer, and [Indian gaur](#)**.
    - Scarcity of natural prey could lead tigers to **target livestock, exacerbating conflicts and resulting in more deaths**.
- **Starvation and Infection:**
  - Tiger cubs, believed to be two weeks old, found dead in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve's buffer zone.
    - Postmortem suggested possible causes as **starvation or umbilical infection**.

### Why are Conservationists Concerned About Tiger Population Threats?

- **Poaching Threat:** Recent poaching incidents in the Nilgiris district, underscore the persistent threat to tigers.
  - Poachers target tigers for their valuable body parts, **such as skins, bones, and organs**, posing a grave risk to the population.
- **Lack of Tracking and Protection:** Concerns arise from the apparent challenges in **tracking and protecting tiger populations effectively**.
  - The inability to **monitor and safeguard** these majestic animals contributes to conservationists' worries.
- **Lack of Prey Management:** Inadequate **prey population management** in protected areas may lead to imbalances.
  - Ensuring sufficient prey for tigers is essential for their survival.

- **Habitat Degradation:** Degraded habitats offer limited resources, forcing tigers to roam in search of food.
  - Human activities, deforestation, and encroachments contribute to habitat loss.

# 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

**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

**Threats**

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

**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)



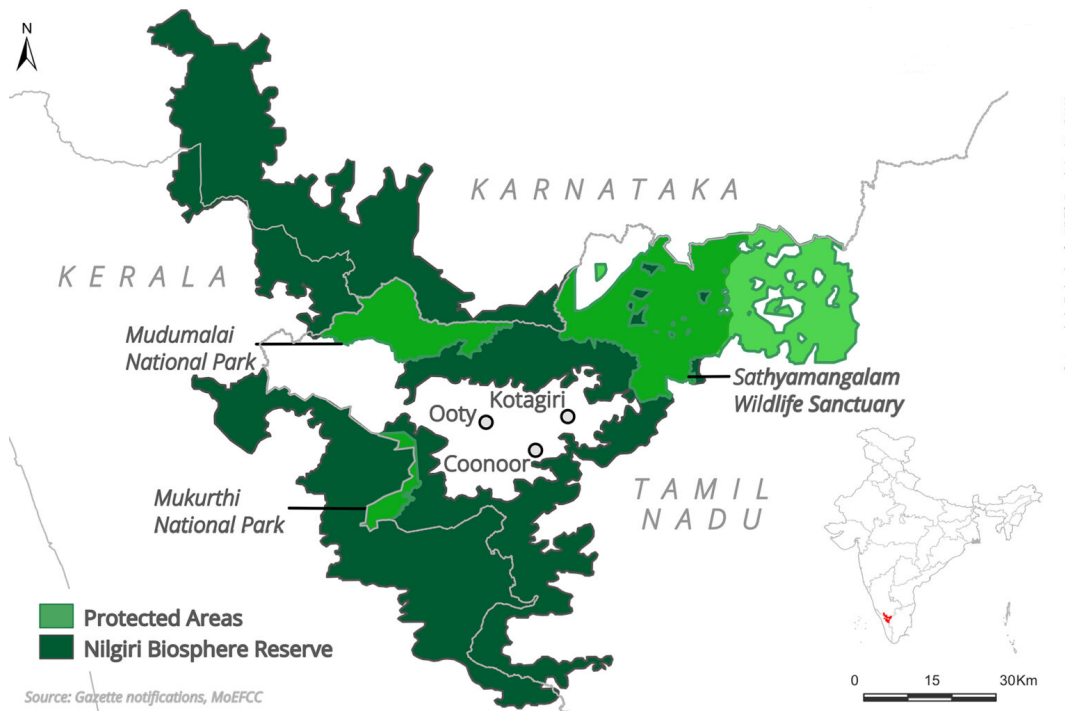
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## Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

- **About:**
  - The very name **Nilgiris** with literary meaning **'blue mountains'** has originated from the appearance of **blue flower clad mountains (Neelakurinji flowers)** of the Nilgiris plateau within the State of Tamil Nadu.
    - The reserve spans across three Indian states: **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.**
  - It was the **first biosphere reserve in India established in 1986.**
  - It is the **India's first biosphere reserve under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.**
  - Home to several tribal groups such as the **Adiyan, Aranadan, Kader, Kurichian, Kuruman, and Kurumbas.**
  - It portray the confluence of **Afro-tropical and Indo-Malayan biotic zones** of the world.
- **Fauna:**
  - Animals like **Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri langur, slender loris, blackbuck, tiger, gaur, Indian elephant and marten** are found here.
  - Freshwater fishes such as **Nilgiri danio (*Devario neilgherriensis*), Nilgiri barb (*Hypselobarbus dubuis*) and Bowany barb (*Puntius bovanicus*)** are endemic to this Biosphere Reserve.

▪ **Protected Areas in NBR:**

- The **Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Mukurthi National Park** and [Silent Valley](#) are the protected areas present within this reserve.



## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Prelims**

**Q. 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)**