



Golden Tiger in Kaziranga National Park

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Why in News?

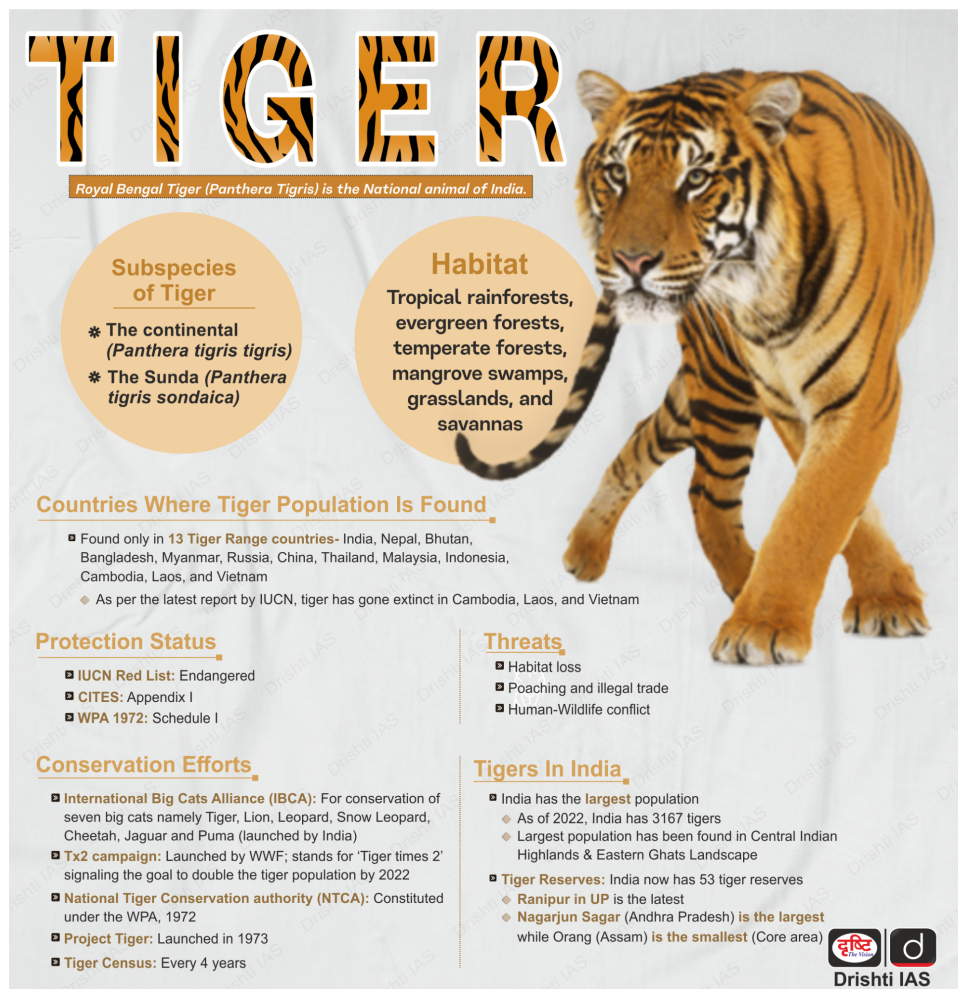
Recently, a wildlife photographer captured a **rare golden tiger** in [Kaziranga National Park \(KNP\)](#).



What are the Key Facts About the Golden Tiger?

- **Golden tigers** (also known as golden tabby tigers) are a **colour form**, not a separate subspecies, like white and [black tigers](#).
 - They are exceptionally rare in the wild and even rarer in captivity.
- Golden tiger spotted in KNP are a **color variation of Bengal tigers** caused by a presence of recessive gene called "**wideband**".
 - The wideband gene reduces melanin production during the cycle of hair growth. Thus, the **agouti mutation (production of a protein that is usually expressed in the skin) is responsible for the blond or golden skin**, while the orange stripes appear due to the '**tabby**' mutation'.
 - The Tabby gene responsible for most tabby patterns (coat pattern) in domestic cats.

- Black and golden tigers basically exist as they **both possess a recessive gene** which is expressed due to the **absence of a dominant gene to suppress it**. When two individuals with dominant traits breed, recessive genes are masked, but **when two individuals with recessive genes breed, the recessive gene is expressed** and such is the case for these two tiger (Black and golden) mutants.



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)

Drishti IAS

Kaziranga National Park

- Formed in 1908 KNP is located in the edge of the **north eastern part of the country in the district of Golaghat and Nagoan in the state of Assam**. It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
 - In the year 1985, the park was declared as a **World Heritage Site by UNESCO** and was declared as **Tiger Reserve in 2006**.
- It is the single **largest undisturbed and representative** area in the **Brahmaputra** Valley floodplain.
- KNP has mainly four types of vegetation' like **alluvial inundated grasslands**, alluvial **savanna woodlands**, **tropical moist mixed deciduous forests**, and **tropical semi-evergreen forests**.
- It is the home to more than 2200 **Indian one-horned rhinoceros**, approximately **2/3rd** of their total world population.
- KNP harbours significant populations of other threatened species **including tigers, elephants, wild water buffalo and bears** as well as aquatic species including the **Ganges River dolphin**. It is an important area for migratory birds.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2013)

National Park River flowing through Park

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)

Q2. 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 environment." Comment with relevant illustrations. **(2018)**

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