



Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, in a significant development for tiger conservation efforts, the **Goa bench of the Bombay High Court** has issued a **directive to the Goa government** to notify the [Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas as a tiger reserve](#) under the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#) within **three months** from 24th July 2023.

- The decision comes **after a prolonged legal battle and demands from environmentalists and conservationists**, and it carries implications for wildlife protection and forest dwellers in the region.

Note:

- Tiger Reserves are notified by **State Governments** as per provisions of **Section 38V** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** on advice of the [National Tiger Conservation Authority](#).

What are the Key Facts about Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary?

- **Location and Landscape:**
 - Located in the **Northern part of Goa**, Sanguem taluka, near **Valpoi town**.
 - Encompasses picturesque waterfalls, including **Vazra Sakla Falls and Viridi Falls**.
 - Known for its nesting grounds of **critically endangered Long-billed vultures** near **Vazra Falls**.
 - Diverse landscape with thick **moist deciduous forests** and some **evergreen species**.
 - Notable for **sacred groves protecting rare and indigenous trees**.
- **Flora and Fauna**
 - Rich biodiversity with **Indian gaur, Tigers, Barking deer, Sambar deer, Wild boar, Indian hare, and more**.
 - Attracts **herpetologists** due to the presence of various snakes, including the **'big four' venomous snakes** which are **Indian krait, Russell's viper, Saw-scaled viper and Spectacled cobra**.
 - Designated an **International Bird Area** for hosting several bird species like **Malabar parakeet and Rufous babbler**.
 - Represents a crucial habitat for **tiger conservation in Goa**.
- **Unique Geographical Features:**
 - Home to the **three highest peaks in Goa: Sonsogod (1027 mts), Talavche Sada (812 mts), and Vageri (725 mts)**.
 - **Mhadei River**, a lifeline of Goa, originates in Karnataka, passes through the sanctuary, and meets the Arabian Sea at Panaji.
 - The sanctuary acts as a catchment area for the Mhadei River.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. Consider the following protected areas: (2012)

1. Bandipur
2. Bhitarkanika
3. Manas
4. Sunderbans

Which of the above are declared Tiger Reserves?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
 (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
 (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Bandipur Tiger Reserve: It was formed by including most of the forest areas of the then Venugopala Wildlife Park, established under government notification dated 19th February 1941 and the area was enlarged in 1985 extending over an area of 874.20 sq km and named as Bandipur National Park. This reserve was brought under Project Tiger in 1973. It is situated in the contiguous landscape spread in the districts of Southern Karnataka namely the Mysore and Chamarajanagar. It is a distinctive landmass located at the trijunction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Faunal biodiversity includes common leopard, royal Bengal tiger, jungle cat, sloth bear, Asian elephant, wild boar, grey heron, shaheen falcon, little bustard-quail, common cobra, green vine snake etc. Hence, 1 is correct.
- Sunderbans Tiger Reserve: In 1875 under the Forest Act, 1865 (Act VIII of 1865), a large part of

Sunderbans forest was declared as “reserved” Post-independence, it was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1977 and established as a national park on 4th May, 1984. In the year 1978, Sundarbans was declared a national park, and in 1973, it was declared a tiger reserve under Project Tiger. It is located in the state of West Bengal. Some of the common species of plants which are found include sundari tree, golpati, champa, dhundul, genwa and hatal. There are about 78 species of mangroves in these forests. This reserve is home to Royal Bengal Tiger along with other animals such as fishing cats, macaques, leopard cats, Indian grey mongoose, wild boar, flying fox, pangolin, and Indian grey mongoose. Hence, 4 is correct.

- **Manas Tiger Reserve:** In the year 1907 the forest was declared as Reserve forest. Post independence, in 1950, Manas Reserve forest was declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary. With the launch of Project Tiger in 1973, Manas Tiger Reserve was officially declared. UNESCO declared it as a World Heritage Site (Natural) in 1985 and further designated as Biosphere Reserve under Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO in 1989. It is located at the merger of terai grasslands and the bhabar grasslands ascending to semi-evergreen forests and then to Bhutan Himalayas in the state of Assam. This tiger reserve is an example of inter country tiger conservation and it extends from Assam in India to Royal Manas in Bhutan. It is very rich in the population of Royal Bengal Tigers. The last population of the pygmy survives in the wilds of Manas and nowhere else in the world. Hence, 3 is correct.
- **Bhitarkanika Wetland:** It is represented by as many as 3 protected Areas, namely “the Bhitarkanika National Park”, “the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary” and “the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary”. The Bhitarkanika National Park is a prime habitat of leopard cat, fishing cat, wild boar, spotted deer, sambar, dolphin, salt water crocodile. However, Bhitarkanika has not been declared as a tiger reserve. Hence, 2 is not correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer

Q2. From the ecological point of view, which one of the following assumes importance in being a good link between the Eastern Ghats and the Western Ghats? (2017)

- (a) Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve
- (b) Nallamala Forest
- (c) Nagarhole National Park
- (d) Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve

Ans: (a)

- Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve is a protected area along the Western Ghats in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu.
- Sathyamangalam forest range is a significant wildlife corridor in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve between the Western Ghats and the rest of the Eastern Ghats and a genetic link between the four other protected areas which it adjoins, including the Biligiriranga Swamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary, Sigur Plateau, Mudumalai National Park and Bandipur National Park.
- First declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 2008 and enlarged in 2011, it covers a forest area of 1,411.6 sq km and is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. In 2013, it became the fourth tiger reserve as a part of Project Tiger in the State of Tamil Nadu.
- Nallamala Forest is one of the largest undisturbed stretches of forest in South India. It is located in the Nallamala Hill, which is a part of the Eastern Ghats. It is spread over 5 districts, namely Kurnool, Guntur, Kadapa, Mahabubnagar and Prakasam. The forest has a good tiger population and a part of the forest belongs to the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve.
- Nagarhole National Park is situated in two districts of Mysore and Kodagu in the State of Karnataka. Nagarhole National Park forms a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and together with **Bandipur National Park and Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary to its South-East and Wayanad to the South-West, is one of the last remaining and best protected habitats for endangered species like the Elephant and the Tiger.**
- Seshachalam hills are the hill ranges spread in parts of Chittoor and Kadapa districts of Andhra Pradesh and have been designated as Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve in 2010. The Biosphere Reserve has large reserves of red sandalwood. **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

