



# SIT Report on Tigers Deaths in MP

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, a **Special Investigation Team (SIT)** report on the deaths of 43 tigers in Madhya Pradesh in **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve** and **Shahdol Forest Circle** between 2021 and 2023 has raised significant concerns regarding the effectiveness of wildlife protection measures in India.

- The report highlights serious lapses in investigations, insufficient evidence collection, and a lack of accountability among officials responsible for tiger conservation.

## Tiger Mortalities in India:

- The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** reported a **rising trend in tiger deaths** over recent years, with totals of **96 in 2019, 106 in 2020, 127 in 2021, 121 in 2022,** and peaking at **178 in 2023**, marking the highest number of fatalities since 2012.
- A total of 628 [tigers](#) died in India between 2019 and 2024.
- The number of tigers in India stood at **3,682**, around **75%** of the global wild tiger population, in 2022.
- India launched **Project Tiger** in **1973**, to promote tiger conservation.
- Currently, India has **55 tiger reserves** covering more than **78,735 square km, nearly 2.4%** of the country's geographical area, of tiger habitat.

## Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR)

- It is located in the Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh, within the Vindhya hills.
- The park consists of 3 distinct areas: '**Bandhavgarh National Park**', '**Panpatha Wildlife Sanctuary**' (the "**Core Area**") and the adjoining notified "**Buffer Area**" spread across the districts of **Umaria, Shahdol and Katni**.
- It was declared a **national park** in **1968** and a **tiger reserve** in **1993** under the **Project Tiger** Network, alongside the Panpatha Sanctuary.
- Wildlife species found here include **Tiger, Leopard, Dhole (Indian Wild Dog), Bengal or Indian Fox, Sloth Bear, Smooth-coated Otter, Indian Rock Python, Rusty Spotted Cat, Fishing Cat, Gaur, and Wild Elephant**.
- BTR is renowned for its high density of Royal Bengal Tigers, the highest in India and the world.

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## HOW THE TIGERS DIED, ACCORDING TO SIT REPORT

Reason for death	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve	Shahdol forest circle
Electrocution	3	3
Infighting	17	0
Disease/illness	4	0
Senility	2	0
Body parts seized	2	0
Poisoning	0	1
Road accident	0	1
Unconfirmed	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>



Figures for 2021-2023 period

### What are the Key Findings of the SIT Report?

- **Inadequate Investigations:** Insufficient probing into at least 10 cases of tiger deaths, with only two arrests for unnatural deaths. Authorities showed disinterest, leading to many missing body parts.
- **Absence of Vital Evidence:** Lacking mobile forensics and electric trip data in electrocution cases, and neglecting land ownership investigations relevant to poaching.
- **Misclassification of Death Causes:** Tendency to attribute deaths to infighting without proper investigation, potentially hiding poaching incidents.
- **Post-Mortem Issues:** Inadequate post-mortem procedures, with poor sample collection and documentation.
- **Negligence in Treatment:** Documented medical negligence, including failure to identify foreign objects during treatment, causing a tigress's death.

# 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 55 tiger reserves
  - Dholpur-Karauli in Rajasthan** is the latest
  - Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh)** is the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area)



## Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the SC - Recommendations for Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR) (2024)

- High Traffic Impact:** Significant vehicular traffic from temple pilgrims is degrading habitats and increasing pollution.
  - Recommendation:** Ban private vehicle entry by March 2025, and introduce electric shuttle buses. Explore tramways, elevated roads, or ropeways based on feasibility studies.
- Special Tiger Protection Force:** Establish a force to address man-animal conflicts and poaching risks due to the growing tiger population and nearby villages.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Questions (PYQs)

### 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)**

**Q. 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)**

**Q. 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)**