



Black Panther in Achanakmar Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, a rare [black panther](#) has been sighted in the **Achanakmar tiger reserve (ATR)** in **Bilaspur district in Chhattisgarh**.

Key Points

- The presence of the black panther in ATR was confirmed during the [tiger census in 2022](#).
- The **fourth phase of survey for the tiger** count in the ATR has **indicated the presence of ten tigers** in the reserve forest, **seven females and three males**.

Black Panther



▪ About:

- [Leopards \(*Panthera Pardus*\)](#) are either light colored (pale yellow to deep gold or tawny) with black rosettes or with black fur.
- The **melanistic leopards, which are either all-black or very dark in coloration**, are known as black panthers. It is a **color variant of spotted Indian leopards**, reported from densely **forested areas of south India**.
- Black coat coloration is **attributed to the expression of recessive alleles** in leopards and dominant alleles in jaguars. In each species, a certain combination of alleles stimulates the **production of large amounts of the dark pigment melanin (Melanism) in the animal's fur and skin**.
 - The appearance of a black coat **may be influenced by other factors, such as the angle of incident light** and the animal's life stage.

- **Habitat:**
 - They are mainly in **Southwestern China, Burma, Nepal, Southern India, Indonesia,** and the southern part of **Malaysia.**
 - In India they can be spotted in the states of **Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra etc.**
- **Threats:**
 - Habitat loss.
 - Collision with vehicles.
 - Diseases.
 - Human encroachment.
 - Poaching.
- **Protection Status:**
 - [IUCN Red List](#): Vulnerable.
 - [CITES](#): Appendix I
 - [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I

Achanakmar Tiger Reserve

- It is situated in **Bilaspur district** of Chhattisgarh. **Established in 1975** and was **declared a tiger reserve in 2009.**
- It is **part of the huge Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve.**
- It **has a corridor connecting** [Kanha](#) and [Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve](#) and plays a critical role in the dispersal of tigers among these reserves.
- **River:**
 - The **Maniyari River** flows right from the centre of this reserve, which is the forest's lifeline.
- **Tribe:**
 - It is home to the Baigas, a forest-dwelling tribal community classified as a "[Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group \(PVTG\)](#)".
 - In 626 hectares of the core area of the reserve, there are 25 forest villages, with approximately 75% of the population belonging to the [Baiga tribe.](#)
- **Vegetation:**
 - **Tropical moist deciduous vegetation** covers the majority of the area.
- **Flora:**
 - **Sal, bija, saja, haldu, teak, tinsa, dhawara, lendia, khamar, and bamboo bloom** along with other 600 species of medicinal plants.
- **Fauna:**
 - It includes the [tiger](#), [leopard](#), [bison](#), [flying squirrel](#), [Indian giant squirrel](#), [chinkara](#), [wild dog](#), [hyena](#), [sambar](#), [chital](#), and over 150 species of birds.