



Forest Fire in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the **Uttarakhand forest department**, **477 incidents of forest fires** have been reported from the state so far in 2024 in which over 379.4 hectares of forest land have been damaged.

Key Points

- Of 379.4 hectares which were damaged, **136.4 hectares** were **damaged in the Garhwal region**, **202.82 hectares in the Kumaon region** and **40.2 hectares in the administrative wildlife regions**.
- According to forest officials, forest fires have become an annual feature and with the change in weather conditions resulting in soaring temperatures, Uttarakhand starts experiencing **forest fires in mid-February, when the trees shed dry leaves and the soil loses moisture due to a rise in temperature, and this continues till mid-June**.
 - Since 2000, when the state was carved out of Uttar Pradesh, over 54,800 hectares of forest land have been damaged till now in forest fires.

Forest Fire

- Also called **bush or vegetation fire or wildfire**, it can be described as any uncontrolled and non-prescribed combustion or burning of plants in a natural setting such as a forest, grassland, brushland or tundra, which consumes the natural fuels and spreads based on environmental conditions (e.g., wind, topography).
- A wildfire requires **three essential elements to sustain combustion like Fuel, Oxygen, and a Heat source**.

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How does fire impact forests and wildlife?

Wildfires are inevitable, but not all fire is harmful to forests. Low-intensity fires can naturally "clean" and thin the forest by removing flammable and thick vegetation on the forest floor. The result is improved habitat for wildlife, healthier soil and new growth of native plants.

It also helps reduce the risk of large-scale high-severity fires that burn through the forest—from the floor to the canopy—with intense heat. High-severity fires across large landscapes can be devastating for wildlife, habitat and surrounding communities.

High-Severity Fire

Low-Intensity Fire

