



## AN OVERVIEW OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN INDIA

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### **Abstract**

India is rich in wildlife with its exclusive fascinating and adverse ecosystem. The seventh largest county of the world covers an area of 3,287,950 km. The forests national parks, forest reserves and sanctuaries form around 22% of the total area. India is among the twelve mega biodiversity countries of the world .countries wildlife is extended over the evergreen forests of north east India to barren deserts of Rajasthan and from alpine forests of Himalaya to the Western Ghats.

The present paper brings the information regarding the Indian scenario,National parks,Sanctuary,wildlife Conservation,AnimalWelfare,Indian Board of Wild life, Project elephant Respectively.

**Key words:** Wild Life, Conservation, Endangered Species, Government of India, Programmes

### **Introduction**

India is rich in wildlife with its exclusive fascinating and adverse ecosystem. The seventh largest county of the world covers an area of 3,287,950 km. The forests national parks, forest reserves and sanctuaries form around 22% of the total area. India is among the twelve mega biodiversity countries of the world .countries wildlife is extended over the evergreen forests of north east India to barren deserts of Rajasthan and from alpine forests of Himalaya to the Western Ghats.

In recent decades, human encroachment has posed a threat to India's wildlife; in response, the system of national parks and protected areas, first established in 1935, was substantially expanded. In 1972, India enacted the Wildlife Protection Act and Project Tiger to safeguard crucial habitat; further federal protections were promulgated in the 1980s. Along with over 515 wildlife sanctuaries, India now hosts 18 biosphere reserves, 9 of which are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; 26 wetlands are registered under the Ramsar Convention

### **National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development**

The National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development, 1992, the National Forest Policy 1988, and the Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, 1992 are the major policy instruments of the Government for dealing with various problems of environment and development in a comprehensive manner. These documents also form the basis for devising strategies, schemes and programmes and regulations for ensuring integration of environmental considerations in the development activities of the various sectors, thus paving the way for achieving sustainable development.

### **Biosphere Reserves**

Areas rich in biodiversity and encompassing unique and representative ecosystems are identified and designated as Biosphere Reserves to facilitate conservation of India's immense biological diversity which is estimated to be over 47,000 plant species and 81,000 animal species, representing about 7% of the world's flora and 6.5% of world's fauna, respectively. Nearly 15,000 flowering plants are endemic to the country and in the case of fauna, the extent of endemism is estimated at about 62%.

### **Biodiversity Conservation**

The scheme on Biodiversity Conservation was initiated during 1991-92 to ensure coordination among various agencies dealing with issues relating to conservation of biodiversity, and to review, monitor and evolve adequate policy instruments for the same.

Pursuant to the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity by India on 18th February, 1994, several steps have been initiated to meet the commitments under the Convention, and to

realize the opportunities offered by the Convention. These efforts aim at bringing the legislative, administrative and policy regimes in tune with the three-fold objectives of the Convention.

## **Forest Conservation**

### **Conference of State Forest Secretaries, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Wardens**

A conference of State Forest Secretaries, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Wardens was organised at SCOPE Complex, New Delhi on 25-26th September, 1997 to deliberate on a number of important issues relating to Forest Policy, Conservation and Protection of Forests, Afforestation, Conservation of Wildlife, and issues of North-Eastern States. The conference was structured into three working groups dealing with general forestry, wildlife, and issues relating to North-Eastern States. The recommendations of the conference are under examination in the Ministry.

## **Indian Scenario**

The country has consisting various types of species are as

- 350 species of mammals
- 1224 of birds
- 408 of reptiles
- 197 of amphibians
- 2546 of fishes
- 57548 of insects, 46286 species of plants of which from 8% of the worlds diversity of life forms.

The country has 606 protected areas comprising 96 national parks and 510 wild life sanctuaries with overlapping of 30 Tiger reserve and 26 elephant Reserve wich over 4.58% of the total geographic area and 22.12% of total forest cover of the country.

## **National Parks**

There are important national parks in our country. They are

- (i) Bandhavgarh National park (M.P.)

- (ii) Bandipur National Park (Karnataka)
- (iii) Corbett National Park (Nainital )
- (iv) Kazi Ranga National Park (Jorhat, Assam)
- (v) Hazaribagh National Park (Hazaribagh, Bihar)
- (vi) Biological Park (Orissa)
- (vii) Kahna National Park (M.P)

### **Sanctuary**

The Indian Board of wild life has defined a sanctuary as an area where killing hunting, shooting or capturing of any species of bird or animal is prohibited except by or under the control of higher authority in the department responsible for the management of the sanctuary. The sanctuary aims at providing maximum protection preservation of wild animals.

### **Some of the important wild life sanctuaries found in our country are:**

- i. Someshwar wild life (Karnataka)
- ii. Chandraprasha Sanctuary (Varanasi – U.P.)
- iii. Gandhi sagar wild life sanctuary (M.P.)
- iv. Gautam Buddha wildlife Sanctuary (Gaya, Bihar)
- v. Hazaribagh wild life Sanctuary (Kohima, Nagaland)
- vi. Manas wild life sanctuary (Barpetta, Assiam)
- vii. Periyar wild life Sanctuary (Kerala)
- viii. Ghana Bird Sanctuary (Bhart-pur, Rajasthan)
- ix. Malapatti Bird Sanctuary (Karnataka)
- x. Vedanthangal Bird sanctuary (Tamilnadu)
- xi. Kalakadu Tiger Reserve (Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu)
- xii. Mudumalai wild life (Nilgiris, Tamilnadu)
- xiii. Koodankulam Birds Sanctuary (Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu)
- xiv. Simlipal Tiger Reserve

### **Wildlife Institute of India**

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) organized four courses and 52 officers and students were trained during the year. Efforts to build-up professional managers for protected areas through training of professional cadre in all aspects of wildlife were continued at the WII. A number of research projects have been started and some projects have been completed and reports published (More details of the WII are given under Chapters 7 and 8).

## **Control of Illegal Trade**

Effective measures were taken for control of illegal trade in wildlife and its products at national and international levels, both through the States as well as the regional offices of Wildlife Preservation under this Ministry. The Subramaniam Committee appointed to look into the issues related to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, has recommended several measures for strengthening anti-poaching infrastructure and arrangements. The implementation of the recommendation of the Committee are being pursued with the State Governments.

The National Coordination Committee (NCC), set up to promote effective inter-departmental co-ordination for the control of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products in the country had one meeting during the year. The Committee comprises representatives from Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, BSF, ITBP, Commissioner of Police, ND, RPF, New Delhi, Deptt. of Post and Telegraph, Army Head Quarter, Traffic India and Reg. Dy. Directors of Wildlife Preservation, Western, Northern, Eastern and Southern Regions.

## **Wildlife (Protection) Act. 1972, Revision**

In order to make implementation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 more effective, an Inter-state Committee was set up to review the Act. The report submitted by the Committee has been circulated to all the State Government s and Ministries for their comments and further action will be taken in consultation with the Ministry of Law.

## **Project Tiger**

- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme Project Tiger was launched on 1st April, 1973 to achieve the following objectives :
- To ensure maintenance of a viable population of tigers in India for scientific, economic, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values.
- To preserve for all times, areas of such biological importance as national heritage for the benefit, education and employment of the people.

At present, there are twenty three Tiger Reserves in fourteen States of the country covering an area of 33,000 sq. kms. The list of Tiger Reserves is given in Table - 1.

**Table - 1** Tiger Reserve

Sl. No.	Year of creation	Name of Tiger Reserve	State	Total area (In Sq. Kms.)
1.	1973-74	Bandipur	Karnataka	866
2.	1973-74	Corbett	Uttar Pradesh	1316
3.	1973-74	Kanha	Madhya Pradesh	1945
4.	1973-74	Manas	Assam	2840
5.	1973-74	Melghat	Maharashtra	1677
6.	1973-74	Palamau	Bihar	1026
7.	1973-74	Ranthambhore	Rajasthan	1334
8.	1973-74	Similipal	Orissa	2750
9.	1973-74	Sunderbans	West Bengal	2585
10.	1978-79	Periyar	Kerala	777
11.	1978-79	Sariska	Rajasthan	866
12.	1982-83	Buxa	West Bengal	759
13.	1982-83	Indravati	Madhya Pradesh	2799
14.	1982-83	Nagarjunsagar	Andhra Pradesh	3568
15.	1982-83	Namdapha	Arunachal Pradesh	1985
16.	1987-88	Dudhwa	Uttar Pradesh	811
17.	1988-89	Kalakad-Mundanthurai	Tamil Nadu	800
18.	1989-90	Valmik	Bihar	840
19.	1992-93	Pench	Madhya Pradesh	758
20.	1993-94	Tadoba-Andheri	Maharashtra	620
21.	1993-94	Bandhavgarh	Madhya Pradesh	1162
22.	1994-95	Panna	Madhya Pradesh	542
23.	1994-95	Dampha	Mizoram	500
Total				33126

- During 1997-98, an amount of Rs. 1355 lakhs has been provided as central assistance for development and maintenance of Project Tiger areas under this scheme. The major activities include construction and strengthening of various buildings, roads, water conservation and communication network, setting up of research and veterinary units and interpretation centres in the Tiger Reserve areas.
- All India tiger population estimation was carried out in the country during the year 1997.

- Under the scheme Eco-development around important protected areas an amount of Rs. 250 lakhs has been provided for the Tiger Reserve areas during 1997-98. Further, an amount of Rs. 1600 lakhs is also being spent under the India Eco-development Project for assisting seven selected Project Areas, which will be provided by the World Bank under the Global Environmental Facility.

Under the Beneficiary Oriented Scheme for Tribal Development an amount of Rs. 135.00 lakhs is available during the year for voluntary relocation of tribal families from the Protected Areas.

### **Wild life conservation**

Conservation is defined as sound preservation management and rational use of the available renewable natural resources. The scarce wild lives which are in grip of the extinction can be protected by various methods of conservation of wild life. The endangered species should be protected through creation of wild life sanctuaries and reserved forests. Thus wild life can be preserved and protected by adopting the following important measures

1. Study of habitat
2. Protection of habitat
3. Improvement of habitat
4. Strengthening and enforcing legal provisions
5. Prohibiting housing
6. Research in wild animals
7. Veterinary service and prevention diseases
8. Breeding farms
9. Creating of national parks and sanctuaries
10. Afforestation

### **Animal Welfare**

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) was set up in 1962 with its headquarters at Chennai, under the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA Act 1960). The Board consists of 28 members representing the Government of India, the veterinary profession, municipal bodies, practitioners of modern and indigenous systems of medicines, Animal Welfare Organisations of the country and humanitarians. Two members of the Rajya Sabha and four members of the Lok Sabha are also on the Board. It is an autonomous body

working under the administrative control of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The main objectives of the Board are to:-

- Advise the Government from time to time on matters relating to enforcement of the PCA Act 1960.
- Enlist the cooperation and coordinate the activities of the Animal Welfare Organisations of the country.
- Provide financial assistance for implementing various schemes for the welfare of the animals.
- Generate awareness in favor of animal welfare by publication of resource materials, exhibitions, film shows, seminars, workshops, camps etc.

### **Indian Board of Wild Life**

The Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL), the apex advisory body in the field of wildlife conservation in the country, headed by the Prime Minister, consists of 10 non-officials, five NGOs, three MPs and thirty official members. During the year two meetings of the IBWL were held under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister, and one meeting of the Standing Committee of IBWL was held under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Environment and Forests. Follow up action on the recommendation of these meetings has been initiated.

### **Project Elephant**

Project Elephant was launched in 1991-92 to assist States having free ranging populations of wild elephants to ensure long term survival of identified viable populations of elephants in their natural habitats. States are being given financial as well as technical and scientific assistance for achieving the objectives of the Project.

During the year an amount of Rs. 4.50 crores was allocated to the elephant range States for habitat management, management of man-elephant conflict, payment of ex-gratia relief for loss of life etc., strengthening of anti-poaching measures, capture and translocation of problem elephant populations etc.



Financial assistance was also provided to the States of West Bengal and Assam to capture eight problem elephants in order to reduce man-elephant conflicts. An amount of Rs. 182.41 lakhs was released during the year to the elephant range States to strengthen their antipoaching and anti depredation activities.

### **Conclusion**

A number of factors are threatening the existence of wild animals. Among these the important ones are the loss of habitat; poaching, accidents and wild life health related. Although the government has taken various efforts to protect the wildlife as well as natural resources. Hence there are so many policy measures, rules and regulations to conserve the forest and wild life in India.

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