

# Bandipur Tiger Reserve completes 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve

April 4, 2023

**In news**– Bandipur has completed 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve on April 1, 2023.

## **A brief note on Bandipur Tiger Reserve(BTR)-**

- Bandipur was formed as National park by including most of the forest areas of the then Venugopala Wildlife Park established under Govt. Notification dated 19th February 1941 and the area was enlarged in 1985 extending over an area of 874.20 Sq.Km.
- **Biogeographically, BTR lies in one of the richest biodiversity areas of our country representing “5 B Western Ghats Mountains Biogeography Zone”** (Rodgers & Panwar, 1988), **surrounded by Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in the South**, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in the South West & on the North West Side the Kabini Reservoir separates the Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserve.
- The Northern side of the Tiger Reserve is surrounded by human dominated landscape with villages and agricultural lands.
- **There were 12 tigers in Bandipur when Project Tiger was launched.**
- **The number of tigers utilising the park is 173** while the number of tigers within the reserve has been pegged at 126 as per the Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India, 2018, published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- **But before the Wildlife Conservation Act, 1972, was passed, the erstwhile rulers of Mysuru** had realised the

imperatives of conserving the flora and fauna and the **Mysore Game and Fish Preservation Act was passed in 1901.**

- **The Mysore Gazetteer has recorded that several forest areas were not only preserved as Game Reserves but Tiger Blocks** were identified and restrictions imposed on shooting.
- Initially an area spread over 35 sq miles was declared as a Game Sanctuary in Chamarajanagar State Forest of Mysore district in 1931 and was protected for 10 years.
- However, the authorities subsequently realised that it was too small an area to constitute an ecological unit, and hence, in 1941, the Venugopal Wildlife Park was constituted extending over 800 sq km of which 82 sq miles was known as Bandipur Sanctuary within the park.
- The Gazetteer notes that the boundary extended from Moyar river forming the natural southern border towards the Nilgiris, and northwards, it stretched till Gundlupet including the 1,450 m high Himavad Gopalswamy Betta. **The entire park was named after Venugopala, the deity at the temple atop the hill.**
- **Project Tiger was launched in 1973, Bandipur was among the first nine reserves to be brought under the flagship programme** and it included most areas that were already a protected area as Venugopal Wildlife Park.
- **It was upgraded to a national park and renamed as Bandipur and the adjacent reserve forests were included** under it to extend its area to 874.20 sq km. At present, it has an area of 912.04 sq km while the adjoining Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary too has been incorporated under Bandipur, which is recognised as among the prime tiger habitats in the world.
- **The Bandipur Tiger Reserve is an important component of the country's first biosphere reserve** – Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the landscape spanning Bandipur, Nagarahole, Mudumalai, and Wayanad complex is home not only to the highest number of tigers in the country –

about 724 – but is also to the largest Asian Elephant population.

### Note:

The State has 5 Tiger Reserves namely, Bandipur, Bhadra, Nagarhole, Dandeli-Anshi and BRT Tiger Reserves which is headed by Additional Pricipal Chief Conservator of Forests (Project Tiger), Mysuru & Shivamogga.



### About Project Tiger-

- Launched from Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand, the project is an ongoing scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- The centrally sponsored scheme is applicable in nine reserves of different States, namely Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha,

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

- Project Tiger has been converted into a statutory authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) by providing enabling provisions in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 through an amendment, via Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
- The NTCA addresses ecological and administrative concerns for conserving tigers.
- It provides a statutory basis for the protection of tiger reserves and provides strengthened institutional mechanisms for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and endangered species.