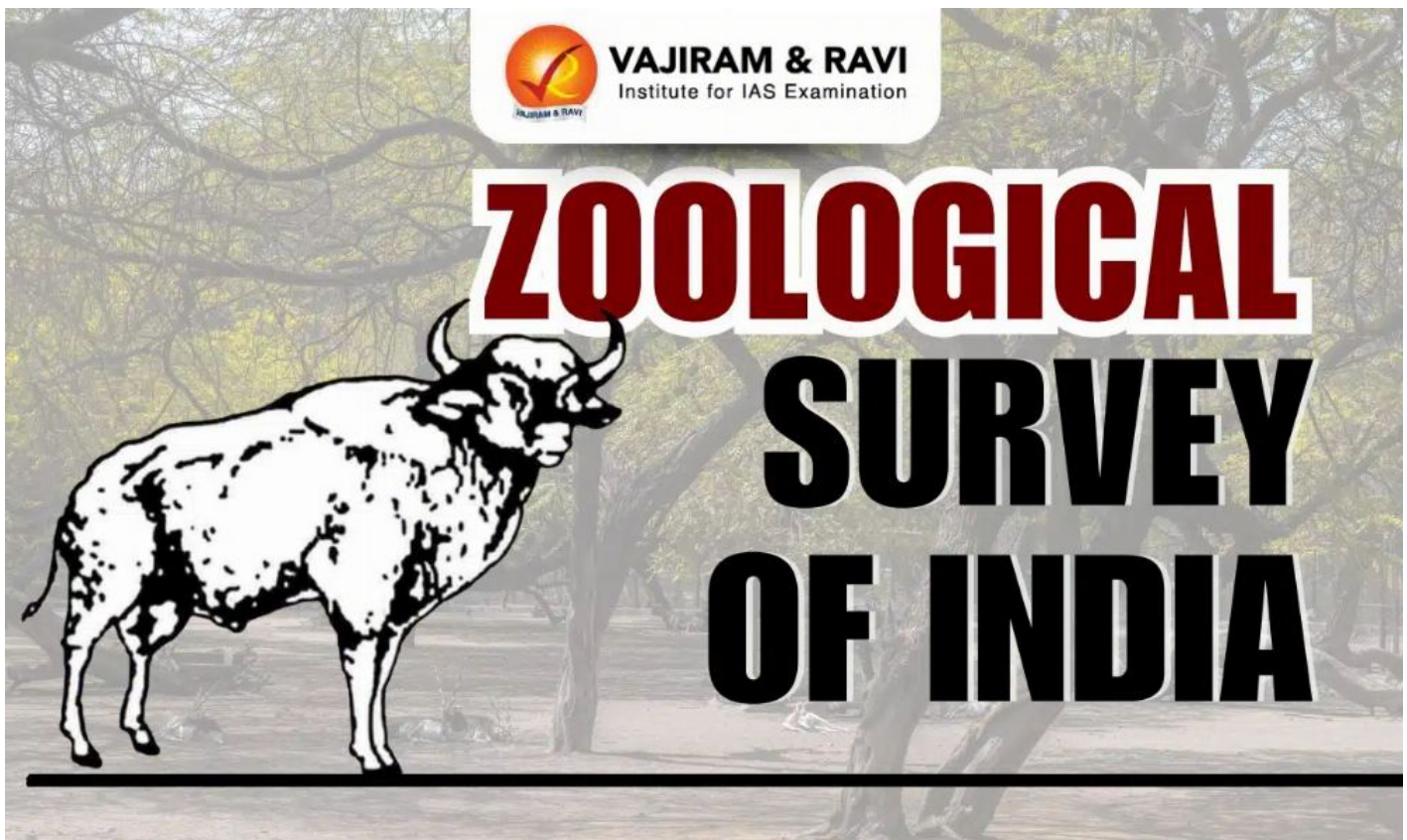


Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Headquarter, Established

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The **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** is India's premier zoological research and animal taxonomy institution. It was established in 1916 and is headquartered in Kolkata. It conducts surveys, exploration, documentation and scientific research on the country's faunal diversity. It is recognized as the repository of the National Zoological Collection under the National Biodiversity Act 2002. ZSI plays a central role in discovering, classifying, conserving and monitoring India's rich animal wealth spread across ecosystems, protected areas and biodiversity hotspots.

Zoological Survey of India Objectives

The Zoological Survey of India works to document, conserve and scientifically study India's diverse animal resources across ecosystems.

- **Exploration and Faunal Surveys:** Conducts systematic exploration, survey, inventory and monitoring of animal diversity across states, ecosystems, forests, wetlands, marine regions and protected areas to improve knowledge of India's fauna.

- **Taxonomic Research:** Identifies, names, describes and classifies vertebrate and invertebrate species through taxonomic and systematic studies, strengthening scientific understanding of Indian animal biodiversity.
- **National Zoological Collection:** Maintains and develops the National Zoological Collection, which serves as a reference repository for scientific research, species identification and biodiversity documentation.
- **Threatened Species Assessment:** Periodically reviews the conservation status of threatened, **endemic** and rare species and provides scientific inputs for wildlife protection and management measures.
- **Biodiversity Database Development:** Creates and maintains the “Fauna of India Database” and undertakes digitization of zoological collections to improve accessibility and long term preservation of biological records.
- **Advanced Research and Capacity Building:** Promotes genomic studies, DNA barcoding, wildlife forensics, animal taxonomy training, conservation education and capacity building programmes for researchers and institutions.

Zoological Survey of India History

The Zoological Survey of India evolved from a museum based zoological unit into India’s leading institution for faunal research.

- **Origin:** The foundation of Zoological Survey of India lies in the establishment of the Zoological Section of the Indian Museum at Calcutta in 1875, which began systematic collection and study of animal specimens.
- **Establishment:** Zoological Survey of India was officially established on 1 July 1916 to promote surveys, exploration and zoological research across the then British Indian Empire and expand scientific knowledge of animal life.
- **Infrastructure:** Through continuous expansion of staff, regional centres and research programmes, ZSI strengthened its capability to study India’s vast and diverse fauna.
- **Role in Mega Diverse India:** India is among the world’s 17 mega diverse countries and contains four biodiversity hotspots: Western Ghats/Sri Lanka, Indo-Burma, **Himalayas** and Sundaland, making ZSI’s role especially significant.
- **Biodiversity Documentation:** Of the approximately 1.7 million described species worldwide, India has recorded 1,00,693 animal species, while many more remain undiscovered, particularly among lower invertebrates.
- **Responsibilities:** Following the Convention on Biological Diversity, ZSI expanded its work in species identification, conservation planning, biodiversity assessment, scientific collaboration and sustainable use of biological resources.

Zoological Survey of India Functions

Zoological Survey of India performs scientific, conservation and advisory functions to support biodiversity research and wildlife management in India.

- **Species Survey and Documentation:** Conducts nationwide surveys to document species diversity, distribution, abundance and ecological characteristics across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

- **Conservation Support:** Provides scientific information for in situ conservation, helping protect species and habitats both within and outside protected areas through evidence based management recommendations.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** Undertakes Environmental Impact Assessment studies with special emphasis on ecology, wildlife and biodiversity conservation for development planning.
- **Sustainable Biodiversity Use:** Monitors commercially important species, advises on permissible utilization limits and provides early warnings regarding declining wildlife populations to ensure sustainable use.
- **GIS and Climate Research:** Uses **GIS, remote sensing** and other modern tools for biodiversity mapping, threatened species studies and monitoring climate change impacts on faunal diversity.
- **Advisory and Collaborative Services:** Supports CITES implementation, wildlife forensic identification, EIACP activities and collaborative biodiversity research with national and international organizations.

Zoological Survey of India Publications

Zoological Survey of India publishes authoritative scientific literature that serves as an important reference for biodiversity research and conservation.

- **Fauna of India Series:** The flagship publication documents taxonomy, distribution and biological information of Indian animal groups and remains a major scientific reference source.
- **Fauna of States and Conservation Areas:** These publications provide region specific faunal inventories and biodiversity records for states, **national parks, wildlife sanctuaries** and conservation landscapes.
- **Red Data Book on Indian Animals:** First published in 1983 and updated periodically, it records threatened and endangered animal species along with their distribution, habitat and conservation status.
- **Animal Discoveries Reports:** Annual reports such as Animal Discoveries 2023 document newly discovered species and new records reported from different regions of India.
- **Faunal Survey A Methodology:** Provides scientific methods and guidelines for conducting faunal surveys, biodiversity assessments and zoological field investigations.

Zoological Survey of India Recent Developments

Recent discoveries and scientific achievements highlight Zoological Survey of India's growing contribution to biodiversity documentation and conservation science.

- **New Lichen Moths Discovery 2026:** Zoological Survey of India scientists discovered two new lichen moth species, *Caulocera hollowayi* and *Asura buxa*, from Sikkim and West Bengal, along with seven new species records from the Indian Himalaya. Published in *Zootaxa* in March 2026, these moths are important indicators of **air pollution** because their caterpillars depend on lichens for survival.
- **Animal Discoveries 2023 Report:** Indian scientists reported 641 discoveries, including 442 new species, 199 new records and 19 new genera, raising India's recorded faunal diversity to 104,561 species.
- **Species Discoveries (2020):** ZSI researchers identified **Amolops siju frog** from Meghalaya's Siju Cave, *Exostoma dhritiae* catfish from Arunachal Pradesh and two new marine moray eel species from Indian waters.
- **Conservation and Forensic Innovations (July 2020):** ZSI developed the Pangolin Indexing System using DNA markers to track illegal pangolin trade and assist wildlife law enforcement agencies.