

Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary Declared as MP's 8th Tiger Reserve

October 27, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



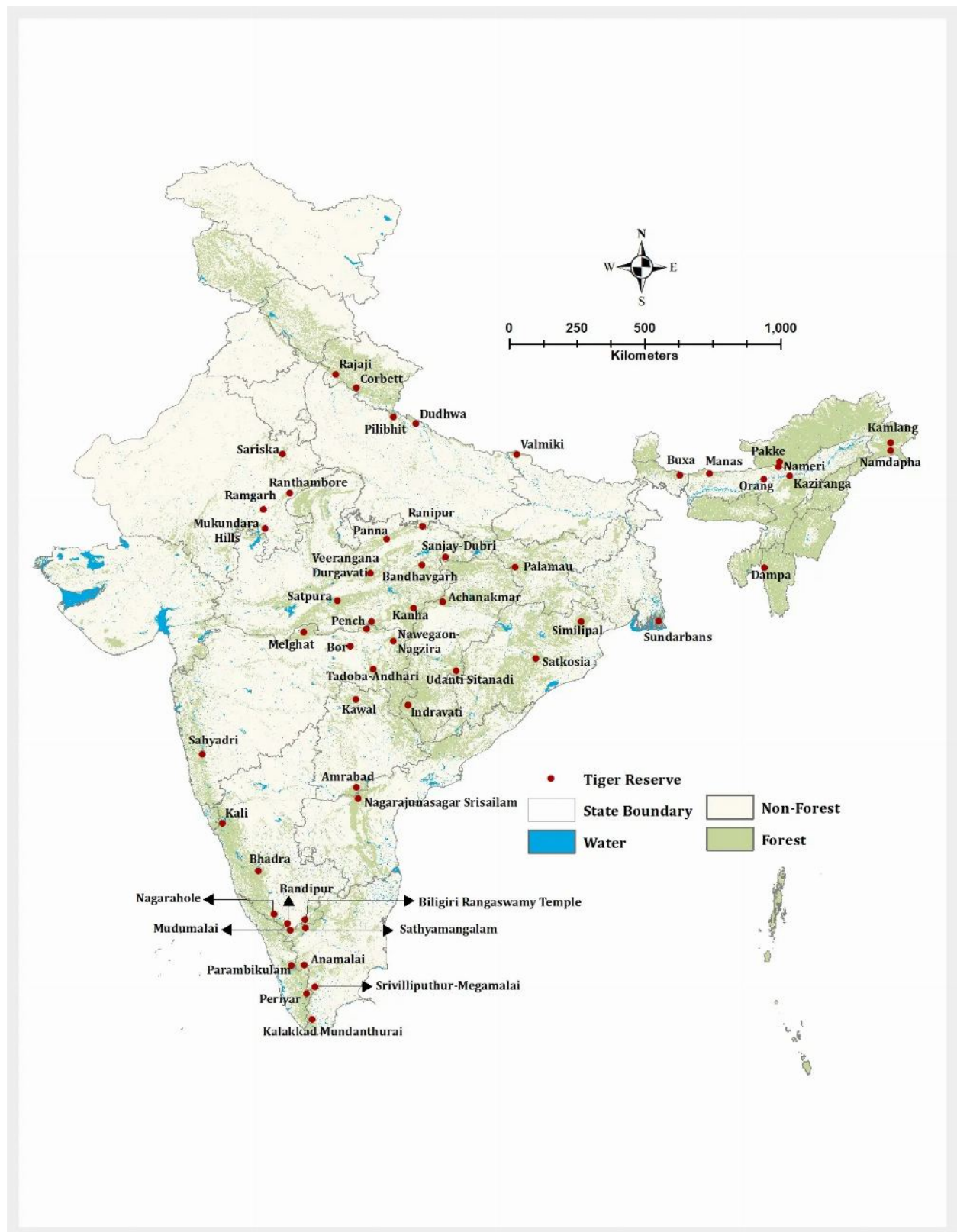
What's in today's article?

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Why in News?

- Madhya Pradesh government, under Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, officially notified the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve, marking a significant but long-delayed move in tiger conservation.
- With an estimated population of 90 tigers, Ratapani now becomes the state's eighth tiger reserve.

Tiger Reserves of India:



• About:

- The tiger reserves in India were set up as a part of **Project Tiger initiated in 1973** and are administered by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** of Government of India.
- As of December 2024, there are **57** protected areas that have been designated as tiger reserves.
- **There were 3,682 wild tigers in India (as of 2023), which is almost 75% of the world's wild tiger population.**

- **Tiger reserves consist of:** A core area which includes part(s) of protected areas such as a national park or a wildlife sanctuary and a buffer zone which is a mix of forested and non-forested land.
- **Goal:** Project tiger is aimed at performing the necessary activities to **ensure viability of the tiger population** in the core area and to promote a balance between the existence of people and animals in the buffer zones.
- **Declaration:** State governments notify areas as tiger reserves based on the NTCA's recommendations.
- **Maintenance:**
 - As per the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**, the state governments are responsible for preparing a Tiger Conservation Plan.
 - Such a plan includes **planning and management of notified areas and maintaining the requisite competent staff** to ensure the protection of the tiger reserve.

About Ratapani:

- **Location:** Spanning **Raisen and Sehore districts**, Ratapani serves as a critical tiger habitat, with tigers migrating from nearby Satpura ranges.
- **Biodiversity and challenges:**
 - **Habitat encroachment and insufficient prey** bases led to tigers straying into populated areas, escalating conflicts.
 - The sanctuary has witnessed **increased tiger-human interactions**, emphasising the need for protection and management.
- **Declaration as tiger reserve:**
 - The notification comes amid a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by wildlife activist, who criticised the **government's delay despite receiving in-principle approval from the NTCA in 2008**.
 - The PIL highlighted issues like **increasing human-wildlife conflicts, degradation of tiger habitats, and encroachments** due to delayed action.
 - The State Wildlife Board (SWB) approved projects like **a coal-based power plant and railway lines**, jeopardising the proposed reserve's ecosystem.
- **Challenges ahead:**
 - **Strengthening protection measures:** Anti-poaching strategies and defined boundaries must be established.
 - **Restoring ecosystems:** Enhancing prey bases and curbing encroachments are essential to ensure a sustainable tiger population.
 - **Community engagement:** Collaboration with local communities is crucial to promote coexistence and minimise conflicts.

Conclusion:

- The **Ratapani Tiger Reserve's** official notification marks **a victory for conservation efforts** but also **highlights years of bureaucratic delays and ecological negligence**.
- Moving forward, effective management and sustained efforts will be critical in preserving Madhya Pradesh's rich wildlife heritage.

Q.1. What is Project Tiger?

Project Tiger is a wildlife conservation movement initiated in India to protect the endangered tiger. The project was initiated in 1973 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of the Government of India.

Q.2. What is Tiger Census?

Every 4 years the National Tiger Conservation Authority conducts a tiger census across India to figure out the Royal Bengal Tiger population in India. The year 2022 was the 5th Tiger Census in India, and NTCA has estimated 3,682 Tigers in India.

News: Ratapani finally declared a tiger reserve after lying in wait since 2007

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/ratapani-wildlife-sanctuary-declared-as-mps-8th-tiger-reserve/>

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