

National Parks in Bihar, Tiger Reserve, Wildlife Sanctuaries

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National Parks and other protected areas are legally designated regions created to conserve wildlife, forests, wetlands, rivers and unique ecosystems. In India, these areas are notified under the **Wildlife Protection Act** 1972, to ensure long term protection of biodiversity. National Parks receive the highest level of protection with strict limits on human activity, while Wildlife Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves and Ramsar wetlands allow regulated conservation based use. These protected areas help maintain ecological balance, protect endangered species, conserve genetic diversity and support climate resilience through forests and wetlands.

Protected Areas of Bihar

Bihar's protected areas include national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, tiger reserves, bird sanctuaries and riverine conservation zones, covering forests, wetlands and rivers.

- **National Park:** Valmiki National Park is the only national park in the state.
- **Tiger Reserves:** Valmiki Tiger Reserve is currently identified for tiger conservation with the proposal of a new Kaimur Reserve.

- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Large forest and wetland sanctuaries across plains and plateaus.
- **Bird Sanctuaries:** Oxbow lakes, dams and wetlands protecting migratory birds.
- **River Sanctuaries:** Ganga stretch conserved for Gangetic dolphins and aquatic fauna.

National Parks in Bihar

Bihar has only one National Park- **Valmiki National Park**, located in the northernmost part of the state along the Indo Nepal border. Despite limited forest cover compared to central India, Bihar's protected areas are ecologically significant due to their location in the Gangetic Plains, Himalayan foothills and Vindhyan landscapes. Valmiki National Park forms the core of Bihar's tiger conservation efforts and connects with forest landscapes of Nepal. The state also supports wildlife through sanctuaries, tiger reserves, bird habitats and riverine protected zones.

Valmiki National Park

Valmiki National Park is Bihar's only **National Park in India**, located in West Champaran district along the Indo Nepal border.

1. Geographical Location: Situated in Shivalik foothills, bordered by Nepal and Gandak River.
2. Area Coverage: Forms core zone of Valmiki Tiger Reserve spread over nearly 900 sq km.
3. River Systems: Harha and Masan rivers originate here, forming Burhi Gandak downstream.
4. Vegetation Types: Moist deciduous forests, semi evergreen patches, grasslands and wetlands.
5. Major Mammals: Bengal tiger, leopard, sloth bear, black bear, Indian gaur and rhinoceros.
6. Deer Species: Spotted deer, sambar, barking deer and hog deer widely distributed.
7. Tribal Presence: Tharu tribe is the dominant indigenous community around the park.
8. Bird Diversity: Himalayan terai birds, migratory waterfowl and forest species recorded.

Tiger Reserves in Bihar

Bihar has important tiger landscapes supporting conservation of big cats and forest corridors. Currently Bihar has only one recognised Tiger Reserve at Valmiki National Park with confirmed Breeding of Tigers. Although the state is set to get the second Tiger reserve within the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary which has received the permit from the Government and remains for the NTCA approval.

Valmiki Tiger Reserve

Valmiki Tiger Reserve is Bihar's flagship conservation area and the 18th tiger reserve of India.

1. Location: Situated in West Champaran along Nepal border in Shivalik foothills.
2. Total Area: About 899 sq km including core and buffer zones.
3. Core Habitat: Nearly 598 sq km notified as critical tiger habitat.
4. Forest Types: Sal forests, mixed deciduous forests, swamps and grasslands.
5. River Network: Gandak, Pandai, Manor, Harha and Masan rivers flow through reserve.
6. Tiger Population: Tiger numbers increased from single digits to over 20 recently.

7. Mammal Diversity: Over 50 mammal species recorded by Zoological Survey of India.
8. Reptiles and Amphibians: Crocodiles, gharials, pythons, king cobra and hill turtles present.
9. Bird Species: More than 240 bird species including vultures and Himalayan terai birds.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in Bihar

Bihar has a diverse network of wildlife sanctuaries protecting forests, wetlands, rivers and bird habitats. These sanctuaries are spread across Gangetic plains, Chota Nagpur plateau edges and Vindhyan ranges. They support mammals, birds, reptiles and aquatic species, many of which are endangered. Wetland sanctuaries like Kanwar Jheel are internationally important, while river sanctuaries protect India's national aquatic animal. Forest sanctuaries such as Bhimbandh and Kaimur maintain ecological stability and act as wildlife corridors in eastern India.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in Bihar List

Bihar's major sanctuaries conserve unique **ecosystems** ranging from forests to oxbow lakes and rivers. The list of major wildlife sanctuaries in Bihar has been given below:

- **Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary:** Large forest sanctuary south of Ganges with geothermal hot springs.
- **Gautam Buddha Wildlife Sanctuary:** Cross state sanctuary with sal forests and large carnivores.
- **Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary:** Bihar's largest sanctuary and important tiger corridor.
- **Kanwar Jheel Wildlife Sanctuary:** Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake and Ramsar site.
- **Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary:** Wetland sanctuary on Gandaki floodplain supporting migratory birds.
- **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary:** 60 km Ganga stretch protecting endangered dolphins.
- **Pant Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary:** Hill forest sanctuary around ancient Rajgir landscape.
- **Nagi Nakti Bird Sanctuaries:** Important bird area supporting thousands of migratory birds.

Ramsar Sites in Bihar

Bihar's Ramsar wetlands are internationally important oxbow lakes and bird sanctuaries that support migratory birds, endangered species, flood regulation and local livelihoods across the Gangetic plains. There are total 6 Ramsar Sites in Bihar including recently recognised areas:

1. **Kanwar Taal (Begusarai):** Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake supporting critically endangered vultures and waterbirds.
2. **Nagi Bird Sanctuary (Jamui):** Man made wetland hosting large congregations of bar headed geese.
3. **Nakti Bird Sanctuary (Jamui):** Dam reservoir evolved into a major habitat for migratory ducks.
4. **Gokul Jalashay (Bhagalpur):** Oxbow lake along Ganga supporting birds and local fisheries.
5. **Udaipur Jheel (Bhagalpur):** Wetland within wildlife sanctuary aiding groundwater recharge.

Gogabeel Lake (Katihar): Floodplain wetland important for local **biodiversity** and fisheries.

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