

National Parks in West Bengal, Sanctuaries, Reserves, Ramsar Sites

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National Parks in West Bengal are legally protected areas created to conserve ecosystems, wildlife species, and natural landscapes with minimal human interference. The Protected areas include **National Parks in India**, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves, Biosphere Reserves, and Ramsar Sites. These categories differ in management intensity, allowed activities, and conservation objectives. In India, protected areas support biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and ecological security. The Protected Areas in West Bengal conserve mangroves, Himalayan forests, floodplains, wetlands, and grasslands, safeguarding endangered species like the Royal Bengal Tiger, Indian rhinoceros, red panda, and several migratory birds.

Protected Areas in West Bengal

Protected areas cover around 4% of the total area of West Bengal. These areas are rich in Mangroves, Himalayan forests, Terai grasslands, etc. These areas support eastern India's biodiversity security through the conservation of flagship species such as Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, red panda, etc. The Protected Areas in West Bengal include:

- **National Parks**

- **Wildlife Sanctuaries**
- **Tiger Reserves.**
- **Ramsar Sites, etc.**

National Parks in West Bengal

West Bengal has six National Parks forming the backbone of its **biodiversity** conservation framework. These parks represent varied ecosystems, from tidal mangrove forests of the Sundarbans to alpine habitats of the Eastern Himalayas. They protect flagship species such as the Royal Bengal Tiger, Indian one-horned rhinoceros, red panda, Asian elephant, and clouded leopard. They are considered crucial for tiger conservation, wetland ecology, Himalayan biodiversity, and international designations like **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** and Biosphere Reserves.



Sunderban National Park

Sundarbans National Park forms part of the world's largest mangrove delta, shaped by tidal rivers and islands, and supports globally unique estuarine biodiversity.

- Location: Southern West Bengal in Ganga delta, bordering Bangladesh mangroves.
- Global Status: UNESCO World Heritage Site, Biosphere Reserve, Tiger Reserve, Ramsar Site.
- Ecosystem type: Mangrove-dominated delta with constant tidal inundation and saline influence.

- Vegetation: Dominated by Sundari mangrove trees with pneumatophores aiding respiration.
- Flagship species: Royal Bengal Tiger adapted to swimming and estuarine hunting.
- Other Fauna: Saltwater crocodile, river terrapin, dolphins, olive ridley turtle.
- Hydrology: Network of rivers (Ganga-Brahmaputra), creeks, and tidal channels shaping islands.
- Ecological role: Acts as natural cyclone barrier and fish nursery for Bay of Bengal.

Gorumara National Park

Gorumara National Park lies in the Terai-Dooars region and is known for grasslands and rhinoceros conservation.

- Geographic setting: Located in Eastern Himalayan foothills between Teesta and Jaldhaka rivers.
- River system: Jaldhaka River (tributary of Brahmaputra) shapes floodplain grasslands and wildlife movement corridors.
- Vegetation type: Sal forests, savannah grasslands, and moist deciduous formations
- Flagship Species: Indian one-horned rhinoceros population.
- Other fauna: Gaur, Asian elephant, sloth bear, sambar, hog deer.
- Habitat: Riverine grasslands and moist deciduous forests.
- Ecological Value: Supports Terai ecosystem continuity with Jaldapara and Chapramari.

Jaldapara National Park

Jaldapara National Park protects extensive grasslands supporting India's second-largest rhinoceros population.

- Location: Situated along Torsa River in Eastern Himalayan foothills.
- Habitat type: Savannah grasslands with tall elephant grasses and seasonal wetlands.
- Rhinoceros Population: Second-largest after Kaziranga National Park
- Elephant Corridor: Chilapata Forest connects Buxa and Jaldapara.
- Major fauna: Rhinoceros, Asian elephant, leopard, gaur, hog deer.
- Ecological importance: Critical for grassland-dependent megafauna conservation.

Neora Valley National Park

Neora Valley National Park protects pristine Himalayan biodiversity in Kalimpong region, known for minimal human interference.

- Location: Situated in Kalimpong district along Eastern Himalayan ranges.
- Biodiversity status: One of the least disturbed forest tracts in West Bengal.
- Vegetation: Himalayan broadleaf forests with bamboo and oak dominance.
- Altitude: Ranges from subtropical to temperate forests.
- Flagship species: Red panda, classified as endangered globally.
- Mammalian diversity: Leopard, black bear, golden cat, Himalayan flying squirrel.
- Floral richness: Rhododendron, ferns, sal, and diverse understory plants.

Singalila National Park

Singalila National Park protects high-altitude ecosystems along the Singalila Ridge.

- Location: Spread across Darjeeling district along India-Nepal border.
- Altitudinal range: Includes alpine meadows and temperate forest belts.
- Vegetation types: Coniferous, broadleaf, and mixed Himalayan forests.
- Unique Species: Pangolin and yellow-throated marten.
- Iconic fauna: Red panda, clouded leopard, Himalayan black bear.
- Floral diversity: Famous for seasonal rhododendron blooms.
- Ecological role: Protects fragile montane ecosystems, migratory corridors and counter endemism.

Buxa National Park

Buxa National Park combines plains and hill ecosystems along the Indo-Bhutan border.

- Location: Lies in Alipurduar region along Indo-Bhutan international boundary.
- Habitat diversity: Evergreen, semi-evergreen, deciduous forests and grasslands.
- Major mammals: Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, sambar.
- Carnivore diversity: Leopard, clouded leopard, fishing cat present.
- Avifauna richness: Hornbills, floricans, migratory falcons recorded.
- Conservation threats: Flooding, habitat fragmentation, elephant poaching risks.

Tiger Reserves in West Bengal

West Bengal has two official Tiger Reserves under Project Tiger, vital for Bengal tiger survival. India has 58 tiger reserves managed by NTCA. The reserves in West Bengal are mangrove based Sundarbans and forested Buxa landscape. They focus on long term protection of Royal Bengal Tiger populations and maintaining predator-prey balance and ecosystem stability.

Sunderban Tiger Reserve

Sundarban Tiger Reserve protects the world's only mangrove tiger population.

- Area coverage: Total area about 2584.89 square kilometres including core and buffer.
- Global uniqueness: Only mangrove forest with significant tiger population.
- Tiger status: Minimum 79 tigers recorded through camera trapping.
- Biodiversity richness: Dolphins, crocodiles, terrapins, marine turtles.

Buxa Tiger Reserve

Buxa Tiger Reserve conserves diverse forest ecosystems across plains and hills.

- Area coverage: Total area 760.87 square kilometres including core and buffer.
- Floral diversity: Over 350 tree species and rich orchid diversity.
- Faunal range: Tigers, leopards, elephants, pangolins, diverse birds.
- Conservation status: Low tiger density with intensive monitoring initiatives.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in West Bengal

West Bengal has sixteen Wildlife Sanctuaries that complement National Parks and Tiger Reserves. These sanctuaries protect riverine forests, wetlands, grasslands, mangroves, and urban biodiversity pockets. They support endangered species like fishing cat, Indian rhinoceros, elephants, migratory birds, and amphibians. Sanctuaries such as Sundarbans, Mahananda, Chapramari, and Senchal play a key role in landscape connectivity, ecological stability, and conservation education across the state’s diverse ecological zones.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in West Bengal List

Major Wildlife Sanctuaries of West Bengal represent diverse habitats and species protection priorities. There are 16 sanctuaries in West Bengal:

1. Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary: Mangrove habitat protecting tigers, crocodiles, dolphins, and estuarine biodiversity.
2. Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary: Himalayan foothill forests sheltering elephants, leopards, and rich birdlife.
3. Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary: Grassland ecosystem supporting Indian rhinoceros and migratory ungulates.
4. Buxa Wildlife Sanctuary: Forest corridors linking Bhutan landscapes and North Bengal biodiversity.
5. Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary: Contiguous with Gorumara, supporting elephants and grassland fauna.
6. Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary: Highland forests near Darjeeling protecting montane flora and birds.
7. Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary: Northern Sundarbans zone supporting otters, reptiles, and birds.
8. Haliday Island Wildlife Sanctuary: Island ecosystem within Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve.
9. Lothian Island Wildlife Sanctuary: Coastal island protecting mangrove and estuarine species.
10. Jorepokhri Salamander Sanctuary: Last refuge of Himalayan salamander in Darjeeling.
11. Ballavpur Wildlife Sanctuary: Small forest patch conserving dry deciduous species.
12. Bethuadahari Wildlife Sanctuary: Forest reserve supporting deer and small carnivores.
13. Bibhutibhushan Wildlife Sanctuary: Wetland forest supporting avifauna and amphibians.
14. Chintamani Kar Bird Sanctuary: Urban bird sanctuary preserving local and migratory species.
15. Pakhi Bitan Bird Sanctuary: Riverine bird habitat near Teesta Barrage.
16. Raiganj Bird Sanctuary: Important nesting ground for migratory birds in North Bengal.

Ramsar Sites in West Bengal

Ramsar Sites in West Bengal highlight internationally significant wetlands supporting biodiversity and livelihoods.

- **East Kolkata Wetlands:** World’s largest sewage-fed aquaculture system maintaining urban ecological balance.
- **Sundarban Wetland:** India’s largest Ramsar Site with extensive mangrove biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Also Check	
National Parks in Uttar Pradesh	National Parks in Bihar

National Parks in Assam	National Parks in Uttarakhand
National Parks in West Bengal	National Parks in Arunachal Pradesh
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National Parks in Goa	National Parks in Jharkhand
National Parks in Gujarat	National Parks in Kerala
National Parks in Haryana	National Parks in Madhya Pradesh
National Parks in Himachal Pradesh	National Parks in Maharashtra
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