

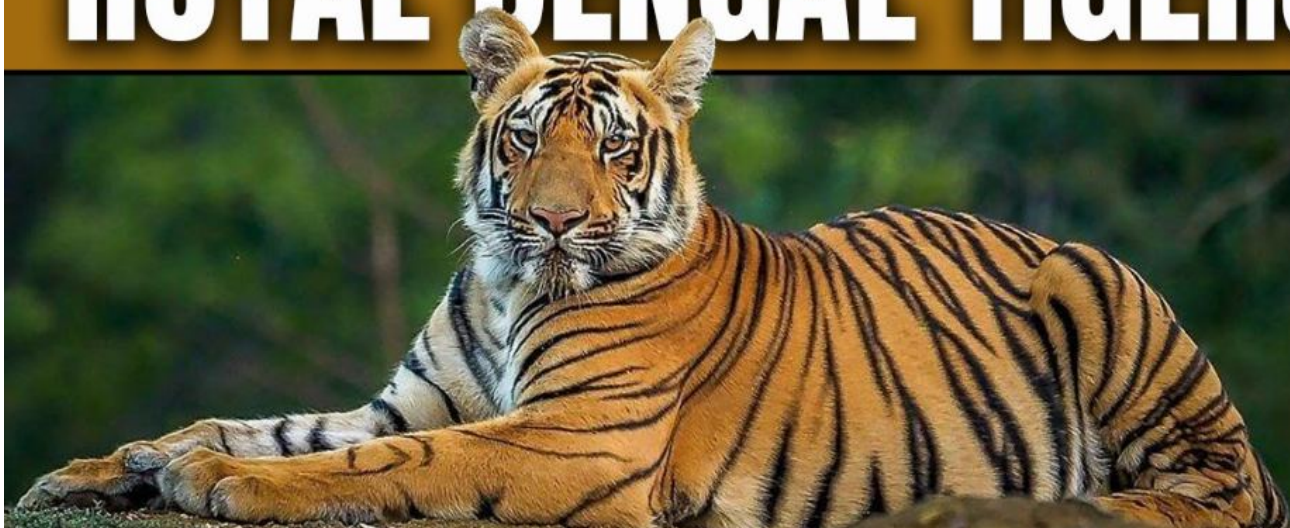
Royal Bengal Tigers, Characteristics, Conservation Efforts

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VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

ROYAL BENGAL TIGERS



The **Royal Bengal Tiger** (scientific name: *Panthera tigris tigris*) is one of the most magnificent and powerful big cats in the world. It is the **national animal of India and Bangladesh**, symbolizing strength, courage, and grace. Found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, this tiger plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance as an apex predator.

Scientific Classification and Status

The Royal Bengal Tiger belongs to the family of big cats and is classified as:

- Scientific Name: *Panthera tigris tigris*
- Conservation Status: **Endangered (IUCN Red List)**
- Legal Protection: Schedule I under **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**
- CITES Status: Appendix I

Royal Bengal Tiger Physical Characteristics

The Royal Bengal Tiger is known for its powerful build, striking appearance, and unique stripe patterns that make it one of the most recognizable big cats in the world. Its physical features are specially adapted for hunting, camouflage, and survival in diverse habitats.

- **Body Size and Length:** Adult males can reach up to 3–3.2 meters (including tail), while females are slightly smaller, making them one of the largest tiger subspecies.
- **Weight:** Males typically weigh between 200–300 kg, whereas females range from 100–180 kg, showing clear sexual dimorphism.
- **Coat and Coloration:** The body has a bright orange or reddish-yellow coat with dark black stripes, which helps in camouflage within forest vegetation.
- **Stripe Pattern:** Each tiger has a unique stripe pattern, similar to human fingerprints, used for individual identification.
- **Eyes and Vision:** Tigers have large eyes with excellent night vision, enabling them to hunt effectively in low light conditions.
- **Limbs and Strength:** Strong muscular legs allow them to leap long distances (up to 8–10 meters) and overpower large prey.
- **Tail:** The long tail helps in maintaining balance while running and turning during hunting.
- The gestation period of the Royal Bengal Tiger is approximately **93–112 days (about 3.5 months)**.

Conservation Efforts

The conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger has been a major priority in India and globally, leading to significant recovery in its population over the past few decades.

- **Project Tiger (1973):** Launched by the Government of India to protect tigers through the creation of dedicated tiger reserves with strict monitoring.
- **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):** A statutory body that oversees tiger conservation, implements policies, and ensures proper management of tiger reserves.
- **Tiger Reserves Network:** India has established over 50 tiger reserves with core and buffer zones to ensure safe breeding and habitat protection.
- **Anti-Poaching Measures:** Special Tiger Protection Forces and advanced surveillance techniques like drones and camera traps are used to curb illegal hunting.
- **Legal Protection:** Tigers are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Schedule I), providing the highest level of legal safeguard.
- **Habitat Conservation:** Efforts are made to preserve forests, maintain ecological corridors, and reduce habitat fragmentation.
- **Community Participation:** Local communities are involved through eco-development programs, awareness campaigns, and alternative livelihood options.
- **International Initiatives:** Programs like the TX2 goal and the Global Tiger Forum aim to double the global tiger population and promote cooperation among countries.