

## INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY: INDIA ACHIEVES TIGER CENSUS TARGET 4 YEARS BEFORE DEADLINE

**Prelims:** Environment- Biodiversity

**Mains:** GS-III- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

### Context:

- ▶▶ Prime Minister released tiger estimation figures and said that India has achieved the target of doubling the tiger count four years ahead of the deadline.
- ▶▶ The country now has 2,967 tigers, which has been the result of a growth of 33 per cent in the fourth cycle of the Tiger Census.

### Background:

- ▶▶ India along with 12 other tiger range countries had committed to doubling the population of tigers in their respective countries by 2022, as part of the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) **programme Tx2**.

### Status of Tigers in India, 2018:

- ▶▶ The **four-year tiger census report** shows that the numbers of the big cat have increased across all landscapes.
- ▶▶ The total count has risen to 2,967 from 2,226 in 2014 – an increase of 741 individuals (aged more than one year), or 33%, in four years.
- ▶▶ This is by far the biggest increase in terms of both numbers and percentage since the four-yearly census using **camera traps and the capture-mark-recapture method** began in 2006.
- ▶▶ Tiger numbers are always projected in a range – 2,967, is the mean of an estimated range of 2,603 to 3,346.
- ▶▶ The 2018 figure has a great degree of credibility because, according to the report, as many as 2,461 individual tigers (83% of the total) have actually been photographed by trap cameras.
- ▶▶ The **report does not contain numbers of other predators like leopards**. But better tiger numbers are generally seen as indicating good prey bases and habitat.

## Method Used to Collect Data:

- ▶▶ The population estimates were prepared by collecting field data on tiger sign intensity, prey abundance, human disturbance and habitat characteristics in various forest beats. This was followed by estimates based on camera trap images.

## State Wise Data:

- ▶▶ The growth of tiger has not been uniform across all 18 states where tigers are found.
- ▶▶ MP had the highest rise of 218 tigers, reaching an estimated 526, followed by Karnataka with 524. The two states have the highest population of the predator.
- ▶▶ The numbers have also increased in Uttarakhand (442), Maharashtra (312) and Tamil Nadu (264).
- ▶▶ The count has decreased drastically from 46 to 19 in Chhattisgarh. In Odisha, it has been on a continual decline over the years and now stands at 28.
- ▶▶ No tigers were found in Buxa (West Bengal), Dampa (Mizoram) and Palamau (Jharkhand), reserves.
- ▶▶ Since state boundaries do not apply to the movement of tigers, conservationists prefer to talk about tiger numbers in terms of landscapes rather than of states.

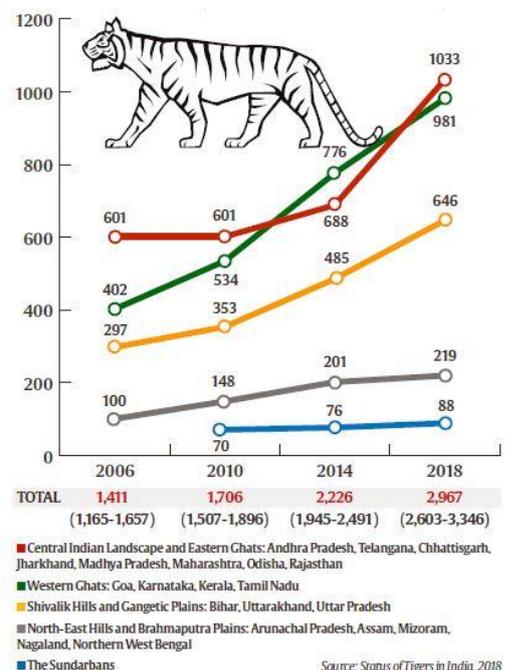
## Tiger Bearing Habitats (Tiger Landscapes) in India:

- ▶▶ The tiger bearing habitats were divided into **five landscape regions**—

1. Shivalik-Gangetic plains,
2. Central India and the Eastern Ghats,
3. Western Ghats,
4. North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains and
5. the Sundarbans.

## Why There is A Need for Tiger Census?

- ▶▶ The tiger sits at the peak of the food chain, and its conservation is important to ensure the well-being of the forest ecosystem. The tiger estimation exercise includes habitat assessment and prey estimation.
- ▶▶ The numbers reflect the success or failure of conservation efforts.
- ▶▶ This is an especially important indicator in a fast-growing economy like India where the pressures of development often run counter to the demands of conservation.



- ▶▶ **The Global Tiger Forum**, an international collaboration of tiger-bearing countries, has set a goal of doubling the count of wild tigers by 2022.
- ▶▶ **More than 80% of the world's wild tigers are in India**, and it's crucial to keep track of their numbers.

### About Global Tiger Forum:

- ▶▶ The Global Tiger Forum (GTF) is the only inter- governmental international body established with members from willing countries to embark on a global campaign to protect the Tiger.
- ▶▶ The GTF was formed in 1993 on recommendations from an international symposium on Tiger Conservation at New Delhi, India.
- ▶▶ The first meeting of the **Tiger Range countries** to setup the forum was held in 1994, in which India was elected to the Chair and was asked to form an interim secretariat.
- ▶▶ In 1997, the GTF became an independent organization.
- ▶▶ GTF was set up to highlight the rationale for tiger preservation and provide leadership and common approach throughout the world in order to safeguard the survival of the tiger, its prey, and its habitat.

### Tiger Range Countries:

- ▶▶ There are 13 Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) viz., **Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.**

