

4. Tiger Reserve Tag unlikely for Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

Prelims Level: Bio Diversity & its Threat

Mains Level: GS-III Conservation, environmental pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Why in News?

- The Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS), home to the largest number of tigers in the State, is losing out on tiger reserve status due to lack of support by the local people.

About Wayanad Sanctuary:

- The sanctuary, spread over 344.44 sq km, is an integral part of the Nilgiri Biosphere in the Western Ghats and contiguous to the tiger reserves of Nagerhole and Bandipur of Karnataka and Mudumalai of Tamil Nadu.
- It holds more number of tigers of the state compared to other two tiger reserves of the state (Periyar Tiger Reserve and Parambikulam Tiger Reserve).



About the News:

- A recent tiger monitoring programme of the Forest Department found that 75 of the 176 tigers in the State are in the WWS, which is part of a large forest complex holding the single largest population of tigers in India.
- But, it receives minimum support from central agencies owing to the dearth of tiger reserve tag.

Who declares an area as Tiger Reserve?

- Tiger Reserves are declared by **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** via **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006** under centrally sponsored scheme called **Project Tiger**.
- To declare an area as Tiger Reserve, the state governments can forward their proposals in this regard to NTCA.
- Central Government via NTCA may also advise the state governments to forward a proposal for creation of Tiger Reserves.
- Tiger Reserves are managed by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- No alternation of boundary can be done **without the recommendation of National Board for Wild Life** and without **the advice of the Tiger Conservation Authority**.

What are the Challenges in declaring an area as Tiger Reserve?

- With the declaration of an area as tiger reserve, there will be effective monitoring for long term conservation of tigers and its prey species. The notification would bring in stringent restrictions on development activities.
- Thousands of poor villagers inside India's tiger reserves would have to be relocated to protect the endangered animals from poachers and smugglers.
- Poachers and smugglers exploit the grinding poverty of forest villagers to keep them on their side.

Way Forward:

- The public protests that were staged in Wayanad earlier against the proposal expressed concerns over the possible impacts of the proposal.
- Any such proposal shall be implemented only after holding wide public consultations.
- However, the conservation of the flagship species is also important for the stability of the ecosystem. So people should be created awareness about its conservation.