



Kirtiwardhan Sukhdeve is a State Forest Service Officer Trainee at the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore. He holds a Master's degree in Agriculture (Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry) and a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV), Raipur.

With a strong academic foundation in agriculture and soil science, and professional training in forestry, he has developed a holistic perspective on natural resource management, forest conservation, and environmental governance. His interests lie in forest management, biodiversity conservation, watershed and soil health, and the interface between scientific research and administrative practice.

He also served as the General Secretary of the SFS 2023–25 Batch at CASFOS, Coimbatore, where he actively contributed to academic coordination, trainee welfare, and institutional activities.

This book, “Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh: An Overview,” reflects his commitment to documenting and disseminating knowledge on the state's ecological heritage. It aims to provide a comprehensive yet accessible reference for forestry trainees, students, and practitioners in environmental and forest management.

Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh: -An Overview

Kirtiwardhan Sukhdeve



**CENTRAL ACADEMY FOR STATE FOREST SERVICE
COIMBATORE**

2025

Special Features: Combination of two major sanctuaries; vital for Wild Buffalo conservation; major watershed for the Mahanadi system.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Dhamtari (approx. 70 km);
Best Time to Visit : November to June;
Nearest Airport/ : Raipur.
Railhead

Reference

1. Official websites of Protected Areas and Tiger Reserves
2. Water Source Atlas of Tiger Reserves by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)
3. Photo credit-Official social media handle and websites of respective Protected Areas and Tiger Reserves
4. Chhattisgarh forest manual - 2020

Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh: -An Overview



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CENTRAL ACADEMY FOR STATE FOREST SERVICE
COIMBATORE

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FOREWORD

Chhattisgarh, the “Heart of India's Forests,” is a land where nature breathes in its purest form. Blessed with lush sal and teak forests, winding rivers, and rich tribal heritage, it remains one of India's finest biodiversity treasures. Its protected areas—from Indravati and Kanger Valley to Barnawapara and Bhoramdeo—reflect the State's vibrant ecological and cultural identity.

“Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh: An Overview” is a sincere effort to present this natural wealth through concise, insightful documentation. It serves as a valuable reference for forest professionals, students, and nature enthusiasts.

This work by Shri Kirtiwardhan Sukhdeve, SFS Officer Trainee (2023–25) at CASFOS, Coimbatore, reflects his commitment and passion for Chhattisgarh's forests.

His initiative exemplifies the spirit of young officers dedicated to conservation knowledge and public awareness.

This book stands as both a tribute and a call—to preserve, protect, and celebrate Chhattisgarh's wilderness for generations to come.

V. Thirunavukarasu, IFS
APCCF & Principal,
CASFOS, Coimbatore

PREFACE

The forests of Chhattisgarh hold a special place in my heart. From the rich sal forests of Bastar to the grasslands of Barnawapara, each landscape tells a story of coexistence, resilience, and balance between people and nature. These protected areas are more than administrative units – they are living ecosystems sustaining wildlife, culture, and livelihoods.

This book, '*Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh: An Overview*', is my endeavour to offer a unified view of the State's ecological wealth. It presents essential information on major protected areas – National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Tiger Reserves – highlighting their landscapes, biodiversity, management importance, and conservation challenges.

The idea originated during my training as a State Forest Service Officer Trainee (2023–25) at CASFOS, Coimbatore. Through academic and field learning, I recognized the need for a concise, trustworthy reference capturing Chhattisgarh's protected-area diversity. This work is both an academic resource and a personal tribute – to the forests and the people shaping the State's natural identity.

I hope this volume becomes useful to trainees, officers, researchers, students, and anyone keen to understand our ecological heritage. More than that, may it inspire viewing

these areas not as remote wilderness, but as vital parts of our shared legacy – deserving care, study, and respect.

Kirtiwardhan
ACF Trainee SFS 2023-25 Batch
CASFOS Coimbatore

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The preparation of this book has been an enriching experience, offering deeper insights into the ecological, administrative, and conservation aspects of protected area management in Chhattisgarh. It strengthened my understanding of forest and wildlife conservation and deepened my appreciation for the harmony between nature and people.

I express my sincere gratitude to the Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS), Coimbatore, for providing the platform and encouragement to undertake this work. I am deeply thankful to Shri V. Thirunavukarasu, IFS, Principal, CASFOS Coimbatore, for his constant motivation and for fostering an environment of learning and excellence.

My heartfelt thanks to Shri C. Vidhyasagar, IFS, Course Director, for his invaluable guidance and mentorship throughout this study. I also acknowledge the faculty members, trainers, and guest lecturers at CASFOS whose knowledge greatly enhanced my learning.

I also extend my gratitude to Editorial committee of CASFOS Coimbatore, Dr. Ramkrishnan R., Scientist C and Dr. B. Muhamad Rafi Hussain for their technical guidance and proofreading.

Lastly, I thank my fellow officer trainees of the SFS 2023–25 batch for their camaraderie and support, which made this journey truly memorable.

Kirtiwardhan

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Chapter 1.

Introduction – Protected Areas of Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh, the verdant heartland of central India, is blessed with a landscape of extraordinary ecological and cultural richness. Carved out of Madhya Pradesh in the 2000, the state extends over 1,35,000 square kilometres, nearly 44 percent of which is covered by forests. These forests range from dense tropical moist deciduous stands of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Teak (*Tectona grandis*) to mixed bamboo groves, grasslands, and dry deciduous woodlands. Such diverse habitats nurture an impressive array of wildlife and plant species, making Chhattisgarh one of the most significant biodiversity regions in the central Indian landscape.

The state's varied topography—stretching from the Maikal and Dandakaranya ranges to the Mahanadi plains—supports unique ecological zones that blend the influences of the Eastern Ghats and the Deccan Plateau. Rivers such as the Indravati, Mahanadi, and Hasdeo traverse these forests, sustaining both human settlements and wildlife. Traditional communities, including the Gond, Madiya, and Baiga tribes, have lived in harmony with these ecosystems for centuries, developing deep cultural and spiritual relationships with the forests. Their folklore, festivals, and livelihoods reflect a worldview rooted in conservation and respect for nature's balance.

Within this context, the protected area network of Chhattisgarh plays an indispensable role in safeguarding the state's natural wealth. The network presently comprises three national parks—Indravati, Kanger Valley, and Guru Ghasidas—along with eleven wildlife sanctuaries and three designated tiger reserves under Project Tiger. Together they represent the mosaic of Chhattisgarh's habitats: from the dense sal forests of Bastar and the marble-lined ravines of Kanger Valley to the open woodlands and grasslands of Barnawapara and Tamor Pingla. These protected areas are not isolated wildernesses; they are integral components of the state's ecological continuum, maintaining corridors for species movement and genetic exchange.

The flora of Chhattisgarh reflects both tropical moist and dry deciduous characteristics. In addition to dominant species like sal (*Shorea robusta*), teak (*Tectona grandis*), bija (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), and tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), the forests harbour numerous medicinal plants such as *Saraca asoca*, *Terminalia arjuna*, and *Rauvolfia serpentina*. The understorey vegetation provides essential fodder, fuel, and non-timber forest produce that sustain local economies. The fauna is equally diverse—tigers, leopards, wild dogs, gaur, sloth bears, sambar, and chital constitute the large-mammal assemblage, while rare and endangered species like the wild buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*), and giant squirrel symbolize the region's unique natural heritage.

Beyond their ecological value, the protected areas of Chhattisgarh hold immense importance for research, education, and sustainable tourism. They serve as outdoor classrooms for students and scientists to study forest dynamics, wildlife behaviour, and the effects of climate

change. Ecotourism initiatives in places like Barnawapara and Kanger Valley are helping generate awareness and livelihoods while ensuring that conservation remains community-centred. Moreover, the integration of Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) has enhanced participatory conservation, bridging the gap between local aspirations and ecological imperatives.

In essence, the protected areas of Chhattisgarh represent more than boundaries drawn on a map—they embody the living relationship between people and forests, between culture and conservation. As the state moves forward in balancing development with environmental stewardship, these natural sanctuaries stand as symbols of resilience, diversity, and hope. They remind us that the true wealth of Chhattisgarh lies not in its minerals or industries, but in its forests, rivers, and wildlife—the eternal heartbeat of this green heart of India.

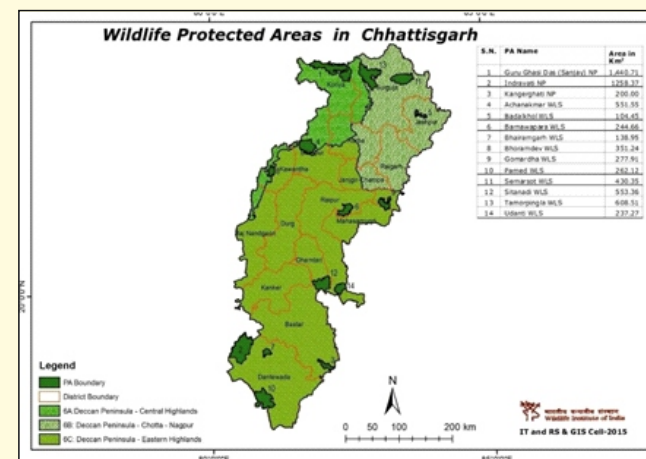


Fig. 1. Wildlife Protected Areas in Chhattisgarh

Chapter 2.

National Parks of Chhattisgarh

1. Indravati National Park

Indravati National Park is one of the most important and largest protected areas in Chhattisgarh, located in the southern part of the state. It derives its name from the Indravati River, which forms the park's northern boundary and serves as a vital lifeline for the ecosystem. Declared a Tiger Reserve in 1983, it is one of the three Project Tiger areas in Chhattisgarh.

The Park represents one of the finest and least disturbed tracts of tropical moist and dry deciduous forests in central India. It provides a natural habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna, including the endangered Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) – the state animal of Chhattisgarh – along with Tigers, Leopards, Gaurs, Nilgai, Sambar, and a variety of bird and reptile species.

Notification: G.O. No. 14-3/74/10, Forest Department, dated 25.12.1981

Location: Dantewada, Bijapur, and Narayanpur Districts

Area: 2,799.07 km²

Tiger Reserve Status: Declared under Project Tiger, 1983

Core Area: 1,258.37 km²

Buffer Area: 1,540.70 km²

Forest Type: Tropical Moist Deciduous and Dry Deciduous Forests (Champion & Seth Type 3C/ C1b and 5A/ C3).

Flora: Dominated by *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Bamboo species*, *Buchanania lanzan*, and *Lagerstroemia parviflora*.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Wild Buffalo, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Nilgai, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, Jackal, and numerous bird species including Hill Mynas, Parakeets, and Peafowls.

Special Features

- ▲ Forms a part of the Dandakaranya forest belt, rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- ▲ The Indravati River provides perennial water and supports riparian vegetation.
- ▲ Known for remote wilderness and as one of the last strongholds of the Wild Buffalo.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Jagdalpur (approx. 170 km)

Best Time to Visit : December to June

Nearest Airport/
Railhead : Raipur / Jagdalpur

Other Facilities : Eco-tourism camps, Forest Rest Houses at Kutru and Bijapur.



Fig. 2. Wild Buffalo



Fig. 3. Spotted deer

2. Kanger Valley National Park

Kanger Valley National Park, located near Jagdalpur in the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, is one of the most picturesque and biologically rich national parks in central India. It was declared a National Park in 1982 and derives its name from the Kanger River, which flows through its lush forests.

The Park represents one of the best examples of the transition from tropical moist deciduous to mixed deciduous forests. It harbours spectacular limestone caves, underground streams, and stunning waterfalls like Tirathgarh, making it both ecologically and geologically unique. The dense sal, teak, and bamboo forests are home to diverse flora and fauna, including the endangered Bastar Hill Myna, the state bird of Chhattisgarh.

Notification: G.O. No. F.8/6/82/10-2, Forest Department, dated 22.07.1982

Location: Bastar District, Chhattisgarh

Area: 200.00 km²

Forest Type: Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests and Mixed Deciduous Forests (Champion & Seth Type 3C/C2 and 5A/C3).

Flora: The park's vegetation is dominated by Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Teak (*Tectona grandis*), *Terminalia* spp., *Pterocarpus* spp., and *Bambusa* spp., along with rich undergrowth of shrubs and herbs.

Fauna: Major fauna includes Tiger, Leopard, Indian Gaur, Chital, Sambar, Sloth Bear, Wild Boar, and reptiles like Python and Monitor Lizard. The Park is also famous for the Bastar Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa peninsularis*), which is endemic to the region.

Special Features

- ▲ Known for spectacular limestone caves such as Kotumsar, Kailash, and Dandak.

- ▲ Contains picturesque waterfalls like Tirathgarh and Kanger Dhara.
- ▲ The Kanger River flows through the park, supporting rich riparian vegetation.
- ▲ Declared as one of the most biodiverse regions of central India.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Jagdalpur (approx. 30 km)
 Best Time to Visit : November to June
 Nearest Airport/ : Raipur / Jagdalpur
 Railhead
 Other Facilities : Interpretation Centre, Eco tourism camps, Caves and waterfall viewing points.



Fig. 4. Tirathgarh Water Falls



Fig. 5. Kanger Dhara Water Falls



Fig. 6. Kotumsar lime stone cave

3. Guru Ghasidas (Sanjay) National Park

Guru Ghasidas (Sanjay) National Park is located in the northern part of Chhattisgarh, spanning the districts of Koriya and Surguja. It was originally part of the Sanjay National Park of undivided Madhya Pradesh and was renamed after the

revered Satnami reformer Guru Ghasidas following the creation of Chhattisgarh state. The Park forms a vital link between the Bandhavgarh landscape in Madhya Pradesh and the forest ecosystems of central India.



Fig. 7. Guru Ghasidas (Sanjay) National Park

The Park is known for its rich biodiversity, dense sal and mixed deciduous forests, and rolling plateaus. It harbours several threatened species and serves as an important wildlife corridor between central and eastern India.

In 2021, Guru Ghasidas National Park, along with Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary, was notified as a new Tiger Reserve, making it the fourth in Chhattisgarh.

Notification: G.O. No. F.8-6/81/10-2, Forest Department, dated 01.03.1981

Location: Koriya and Surguja Districts, Chhattisgarh

Area: 1,466.07 km²

Tiger Reserve Status: Declared along with Tamor Pingla WLS, 2021

Core Area: Approximately 1,000 km² (shared)

Buffer Area: Approximately 800 km² (shared)

Forest Type: Tropical Moist Deciduous and Mixed Deciduous Forests (Champion & Seth Type 3C/C1b and 5A/C3).

Flora: Dominated by *Shorea robusta*, mixed with *Terminalia species*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Bamboo, and a rich ground layer of grasses and shrubs.

Fauna: The Park supports populations of Tiger, Leopard, Indian Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Nilgai, Sloth Bear, Wild Boar, and Dhole. Birds includes Peafowl, Jungle Fowl, Hornbills, Parakeets, and several migratory species.

Special Features

- ▲ Forms an ecological corridor linking Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) with Chhattisgarh forests.
- ▲ Named after Guru Ghasidas, the spiritual leader of the Satnami community.
- ▲ Noted for its undulating terrain, hill plateaus, and the origin of several small rivers.
- ▲ Declared a Tiger Reserve in 2021 along with Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Baikunthpur / Manendragarh
Best Time to Visit : November to June
Nearest Airport/
Railhead : Bilaspur / Raipur / Ambikapur
Other Facilities : Forest Rest Houses,
Interpretation Centres, and Eco-
tourism sites managed by the
Forest Department.

Chapter 3. Wildlife Sanctuaries

1. Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig. 8. Indian Gaur

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 28 June 1975;
Declared a Tiger Reserve: 2009

Location: Bilaspur / Mungeli (Chhattisgarh)

Area: Approx. 557.55 km²

Forest Type: Tropical moist deciduous (Sal-dominated)

Flora: *Shorea robusta*, *Tectona grandis*, *Bambusa*, *Terminalia* spp., *Pterocarpus marsupium*.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Sloth Bear, Wild Buffalo, rich avifauna.

Special Features: Part of Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve; important for tiger corridor connectivity.

Visitor Information:

Nearest Town : Bilaspur / Mungeli;
Best Time : Nov-June;
Facilities : Forest rest houses and eco-tourism options.



Fig. 9. Tiger at Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary

2. Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig. 10. Nilgai at Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1976 (various official notifications)

Location: Mahasamund / Balodabazar district, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 244.66 – 245 km²

Forest Type: Mixed deciduous forests and grasslands

Flora: Sal, Teak, mixed deciduous species, bamboo, riparian vegetation along Jonk River.

Fauna: Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Leopard, Wild Boar, Blackbuck reintroduction initiatives; diverse birds.

Special Features: Known for scenic grasslands and revival of grassland-dependent species; Jonk River flows through.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Barnawapara / Mahasamund;
Best Time : Nov-Jun;
Facilities : Watchtowers, trails, interpretation centre.

3. Badalkhol Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.11. Pangolin at Badalkhol Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1975 (or 1976 in some sources)

Location: Jashpur district, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 104.45 km²

Forest Type: Dry deciduous and hill forests

Flora: Teak, Sal, Terminalia spp., Bamboo; riparian vegetation in valleys.

Fauna: Deer species, Gaur, Sloth Bear, Leopard, various birds and reptiles.

Special Features: Hill-station like climate and scenic valleys; former royal hunting grounds of Jashpur.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Jashpur Nagar;
Best Time : Oct-May;
Facilities : Basic Forest rest houses.

4. Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.12. Sloth Bear at Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 2001 (official notifications/ESZ drafts 2024-25)

Location: Kawardha (Kabirdham) district, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 352 km² (varies by source)

Forest Type: Mixed deciduous and dry deciduous

Flora: Teak, Sal, Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *Lagerstroemia* spp., mixed species.

Fauna: Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Tiger (occasionally), Leopard, Sloth Bear, rich birdlife.

Special Features: Sites around the historic Bhoramdeo Temple; possible corridor to Kanha-Achanakmar landscape.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Kawardha;
Best Time : Nov–Jun;
Facilities : Access to temple tourism +
nature trails.

5. Bhairamgarh Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.13. Wild Buffalos at Bhairamgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1983

Location: Bijapur / Narayanpur region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 138.95 km²

Forest Type: Dry deciduous forests, marshes and seasonal wetlands

Flora: Mixed deciduous species, bamboo, marsh vegetation in lowlands.

Fauna: Wild Buffalo (locally important), Indian Gaur, Sambar, Sloth Bear, Deer species, reptiles and birds.

Special Features: Important for wetland-dependent species and wild buffalo groups; tribal landscapes.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Bijapur / Jagdalpur;
Best Time : Nov–Jun;
Facilities : Limited — forest depots/rest
houses.

6. Gomarda Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.14. Indian Gaur at Gomarda Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1975

Location: Raigarh / Sarangarh region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 277.82 km²

Forest Type: Mixed moist and dry deciduous forests, hilly terrain

Flora: Sal, Teak, Bamboo, *Terminalia spp.*, Riparian species

Fauna: Indian Gaur, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Sloth Bear, Wild Boar, Dhole, occasional Tigers and rich birdlife.

Special Features: Flocks of wild buffaloes historically; accessible hilly landscapes for wildlife watching.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Sarangarh / Raigarh;
Best Time : Nov–Jun;
Facilities : Basic Forest guesthouses.

7. Pamed Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.15. Deer at Pamed Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1985 (various sources cite 1983–1985)

Location: Bijapur / Dantewada region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 262.12 km²

Forest Type: Riparian marshes, mixed deciduous forests and grasslands

Flora: Riparian grasses, sedges, Sal and mixed deciduous trees.

Fauna: Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), Gaur, Deer species, numerous waterbirds.

Special Features: Designated for conservation of wild buffalo; seasonally flooded grasslands.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Bijapur / Dantewada;
Best Time : Nov–May;
Facilities : Limited eco-tourism infrastructure.

8. Semarsot Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.16. Woodpecker at Semarsot Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1978

Location: Surguja / Ambikapur region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 430.35 km²

Forest Type: Mixed deciduous, rocky plateaus and riverine forests

Flora: Teak, Sal, mixed species, grasses, and shrublands.

Fauna: Nilgai, Sambar, Chinkara, Leopard, Wild Boar, Sloth Bear, diverse avifauna.

Special Features: Relatively less-visited sanctuary with intact habitats and important large mammal populations.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Ambikapur;
Best Time : Oct-Jun;
Facilities : Forest guesthouses and trails.

9. Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.17. Malabar Pied Hornbills at Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1974

Location: Dhamtari / Raipur region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Approx. 555 – 556 km²

Forest Type: Moist deciduous forests, riverine corridors (Sitanadi River)

Flora: Sal, Teak, mixed deciduous species and rich riparian vegetation.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Sloth Bear, rich birdlife and aquatic species.

Special Features: Source of Sitanadi River and important watershed supporting Mahanadi tributaries.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Dhamtari;
Best Time : Nov-Jun;
Facilities : Riverside picnic points and forest rest houses.

10. Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary

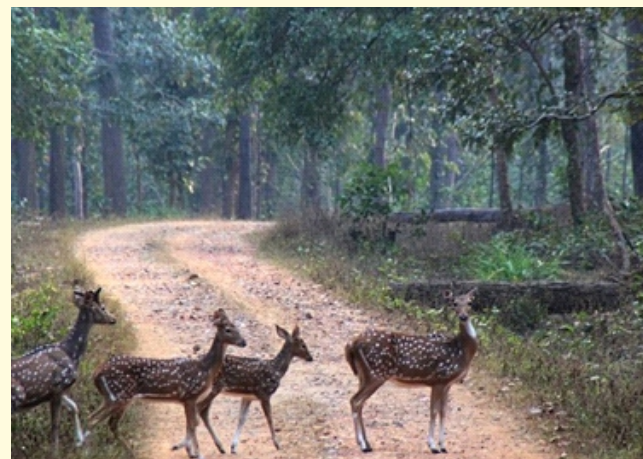


Fig.18. Spotted deers at Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: (notified earlier; included in Tiger Reserve notification 2024–2024 process)

Location: Koriya district, Chhattisgarh (now part of Guru Ghasidas–Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve)

Area: Approx. 862 km² (varies by source; forms part of larger tiger reserve landscape)

Forest Type: Mixed deciduous forests and plateau grasslands

Flora: Sal, mixed species, grasses and shrubs on plateaus.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Gaur, Deer species, diverse birds.

Special Features: Now part of the newly notified Guru Ghasidas–Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve (2024 notification).

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Manendragarh;
Best Time : Nov–Jun;
Facilities : Limited; reserve still consolidating infrastructure.

11. Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig.19. Tiger and wild buffalo at Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary

Notification: Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary: 1973 (Udanti; later included in Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve)

Location: Gariaband / Dhamtari region, Chhattisgarh

Area: Part of Udanti–Sitanadi landscape; combined USTR area ~1,842.54 km² (sanctuary specific area smaller)

Forest Type: Moist deciduous forests and grasslands

Flora: Sal, mixed deciduous species, grasses; riverine vegetation

Fauna: Wild Buffalo (critical population), Tiger, Leopard, Indian Gaur, Deer species and many birds.

Special Features: Crucial for the wild buffalo recovery program; one of the core sanctuaries of Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Gariaband / Dhamtari;
Best Time : Nov–Jun;
Facilities : Conservation centres and limited visitor facilities.

Chapter 4.

Tiger Reserves of Chhattisgarh

In Chhattisgarh, Tiger Reserves form an integral part of the state's network of Protected Areas, though legally they represent a composite management unit rather than a separate category under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Each Tiger Reserve consists of a core or critical tiger habitat, which is notified as a National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary and hence enjoys full protection as per the Act, and a buffer or peripheral area, which usually comprises Reserved or Protected Forests managed for eco-development, habitat improvement, and human-wildlife coexistence. Declared under Section 38V of the Act on the recommendation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Tiger Reserves thus combine strict protection in the core with sustainable resource use and community participation in the buffer, ensuring both ecological security and livelihood balance in Chhattisgarh's tiger landscapes such as Achanakmar, Indravati, and Udanti-Sitanadi.

1. Indravati Tiger Reserve

Indravati National Park is one of the most important and largest protected areas in Chhattisgarh, located in the southern part of the State. It derives its name from the Indravati River, which forms the park's northern boundary and serves as a vital lifeline for the ecosystem. Declared a Tiger



Fig.20. Indravati Tiger Reserve

Reserve in 1983, it is one of the three Project Tiger areas in Chhattisgarh.

It represents one of the finest and least disturbed tracts of tropical moist and dry deciduous forests in central India. It provides a natural habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna, including the endangered Wild Buffalo – the State Animal of Chhattisgarh – along with Tigers, Leopards, Indian Gaurs, Nilgai, Sambar, and a variety of bird and reptile species.

Notification: G.O. No. 14-3/74/10, Forest Department, dated 25.12.1981

Location: Dantewada, Bijapur, and Narayanpur Districts
Area: 2,799.07 km²

Tiger Reserve Status: Declared under Project Tiger, 1983

Core Area: 1,258.37 km²

Buffer Area: 1,540.70 km²

Forest Type: Tropical Moist Deciduous and Dry Deciduous Forests (Champion & Seth Type 3C/C1b and 5A/C3).

Flora: Dominated by *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Bambusa* spp., *Buchanania lanzan*, and *Lagerstroemia parviflora*.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Wild Buffalo, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Nilgai, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, Jackal, and numerous bird species including Hill Mynas, Parakeets, and Peafowls.

Special Features: Forms part of the Dandakaranya forest belt, rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage. The Indravati River provides perennial water and supports riparian vegetation. Known for remote wilderness and as one of the last strongholds of the Wild Buffalo.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Jagdalpur (approx. 170 km);
Best Time to Visit : December to June;
Nearest Airport/ : Raipur / Jagdalpur.
Railhead

2. Achanakmar Tiger Reserve

Achanakmar Tiger Reserve is situated in the north-western part of Chhattisgarh, covering portions of Bilaspur and Mungeli districts. Initially declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1975, it gained the status of a Tiger Reserve in 2009 under Project Tiger.

The reserve forms an important part of the Achanakmar – Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve, connecting the forest landscapes of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.



Fig.21. Achanakmar Tiger Reserve

This area is characterized by rugged terrain, high hills, and deep valleys clothed in dense sal forests, representing one of the most pristine tracts of tropical moist deciduous forests in central India. It is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, forming an essential ecological corridor for large mammals such as tigers and leopards.

Notification: Government of Chhattisgarh, Forest Department, 1975 (Sanctuary) & 2009 (Tiger Reserve)

Location: Bilaspur and Mungeli Districts

Area: 914.00 km²

Tiger Reserve Status: Declared under Project Tiger, 2009

Core Area: 626.00 km²

Buffer Area: 288.00 km²

Forest Type: Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests (3C/C1b) dominated by Sal (*Shorea robusta*).

Flora: *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, and Bamboo species.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Barking Deer, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, and several bird species including Hornbills and Peafowls.

Special Features: Part of the Maikal Range; linked with Kanha landscapes through forest corridors.

Visitor Information

Nearest Town : Bilaspur (55 km);
Best Time to Visit : November to June;
Nearest Airport/ : Raipur / Bilaspur.
Railhead

3. Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve lies in the central part of Chhattisgarh, covering parts of Gariaband and Dhamtari



Fig. 22. Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

districts. It was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2009 under the Project Tiger initiative. The reserve combines the Udanti and Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuaries, forming one of the most crucial habitats for conservation in the Mahanadi River basin.

The terrain consists of undulating plains, gentle slopes, and hilly patches interspersed with numerous streams and rivulets. The area serves as a critical habitat for species like the Wild Buffalo, Tiger, Leopard, and several herbivores, apart from being a vital watershed for central Chhattisgarh.

Notification: Government of Chhattisgarh, Forest Department, 2009

Location: Gariaband and Dhamtari Districts

Area: 1,842.54 km²

Tiger Reserve Status: Declared under Project Tiger, 2009

Core Area: 851.09 km²

Buffer Area: 991.45 km²

Forest Type: Tropical Dry Deciduous and Moist Deciduous Forests (5A/C3 and 3C/C2).

Flora: *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Boswellia serrata*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, and Bamboo species.

Fauna: Tiger, Leopard, Wild Buffalo, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, and rich birdlife including Peafowl and Parakeets.