



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

India's Wildlife Conservation Milestones

Policies, Achievements and Global Commitments

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

3rd March, 2025

*“Today, on **World Wildlife Day**, let's reiterate our commitment to protect and preserve the incredible biodiversity of our planet. Every species plays a vital role—let's safeguard their future for generations to come! We also take pride in India's contributions towards preserving and protecting wildlife.”*

Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India¹

Introduction

Every year on **March 3rd**, the world celebrates **United Nations World Wildlife Day (WWD)** to honour the vital role of wild animals and plants in our lives and the planet's health. This day is a reminder of the need to protect and preserve biodiversity for future generations. The theme for **WWD 2025** is **“Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet.”**²



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited **Gir National Park** in Gujarat today to chair the **7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife**. The Board reviewed the Government's key wildlife conservation efforts, including the expansion of protected areas and flagship programs like **Project Tiger, Project Elephant, and Project Snow Leopard**. Discussions also covered initiatives for the conservation of dolphins and Asiatic lions, along with the establishment of the **International Big Cats Alliance**.⁴

¹ <https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1896391725708403019>

² <https://wildlifeday.org/en>

³ <https://wildlifeday.org/en>

⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2107778>



⁵Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Gir National Park

India is one of the **most biodiverse** countries in the world, even though it covers only **2.4%** of the Earth's land. It is home to **7-8%** of **all known species**, including **over 45,000 types of plants** and **91,000 types of animals**. The country's varied landscapes and climate have created different ecosystems like **forests, wetlands, grasslands, deserts, and coastal and marine habitats**. These ecosystems support rich biodiversity and benefit people in many ways. India also has **4** of the **world's 34 major biodiversity hotspots—the Himalayas, the Western Ghats, the Northeast region, and the Nicobar Islands**—making it an important region for global conservation.⁶

The Government of India, primarily through the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, has instituted a comprehensive framework of policies, legislative measures, and initiatives aimed at conserving and protecting this natural heritage.

Budgetary Allocations⁷

In the Union Budget **2025-26**, the **Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change** has been allocated **₹3,412.82 crores**, which is **9% higher** than the **2024-25 revised estimates of Rs. 3125.96 crores**.

- **₹3,276.82 crore (96%)** is for **revenue expenditure**, which has increased by **8%**.
- **₹136 crore (4%)** is for **capital expenditure**, which has risen by **46%** from **93.25 crore** from **2024-25 revised estimates**.

⁵ <https://x.com/DDNewslive/status/1896437460567228532/photo/3>

⁶ <https://iucn.org/our-work/region/asia/countries/india>

⁷ <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/eb/sbe28.pdf>

	2023-24 Actuals	2024- 25 RE	2025-26 BE	% change (24-25 RE to 25-26 BE)
Establishment Expenditure of the Centre	780	881	946	7%
Pollution Control	845	858	854	0%
Environment, Forestry and Wildlife	530	590	720	22%
Autonomous Bodies	562	437	455	4%
Statutory and Regulatory Bodies	158	187	232	24%
Environmental Knowledge and Capacity Building	74	100	103	3%
National Coastal Mission	32	8	2	-75%
Others	132	65	102	57%
Total	3,114	3,126	3,413	9%

For 2025-26, the central government has allocated ₹450 crore for the **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats** under its centrally sponsored scheme. Additionally, ₹290 crore (64% of the total allocation) has been earmarked for **Project Tiger and Elephant**, reflecting an **18% increase** from the **2024-25 revised estimates**.⁸

National Wildlife Database Cell

The **National Wildlife Database Centre of Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** has been developing a **National Wildlife Information System (NWIS)** on the **Protected Areas** of the country. As of **27th November, 2023** India has a network of **1014 Protected Areas** including **106 National Parks**, **573 Wildlife Sanctuaries**, **115 Conservation Reserves** and **220 Community Reserves** covering a total of **1,75,169.42 km²** of geographical area of the country which is approximately **5.32%**.⁹

Category	Number
National Parks	106
Wildlife Sanctuaries	573
Conservation Reserves	115
Community Reserves	220
Total	1014

The **National Wildlife Database Centre (NWDC)** is providing information on the conservation status of animal species, biogeographic regions, administrative units, habitat types and the network of protected areas in India, in a variety of formats and also providing an extensive bibliographic support for wildlife research.

⁸ <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/eb/sbe28.pdf>

⁹ https://wii.gov.in/nwdc_aboutus

1. Legislative and Policy Framework

- **National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)**: This strategic plan emphasizes landscape-level conservation, community involvement, and the integration of climate change considerations into wildlife management.¹⁰
- **National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan**: The **National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-26) (HWC-NAP)** aims to systematically reduce human-wildlife conflict (HWC) while ensuring wildlife conservation, ecosystem protection, and sustainable development. Developed through a four-year consultative process under the Indo-German Project on HWC Mitigation, it integrates scientific, policy, and community-driven approaches to balance human well-being with wildlife protection.¹¹

2. Species-Specific Conservation Initiatives – Success Stories

2.1 Project Dolphin: Key Developments and Conservation Efforts¹²

Launched on **15th August 2020**, **Project Dolphin** aims to conserve **both marine and riverine dolphins**, along with associated cetaceans, through habitat protection, scientific research, and community awareness. **In 2022-23, ₹241.73 lakhs and in 2023-24, ₹248.18 lakhs** were allocated under the **CSS: Development of Wildlife Habitats** for conservation activities. Key dolphin hotspots have been identified in **Assam, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Lakshadweep**, with focused efforts on **species protection, habitat improvement, monitoring, patrolling, and awareness programs**. A **Comprehensive Action Plan (2022-2047)** has been finalized and shared with relevant Ministries for execution.

Policy & Governance Enhancements

- The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 was **amended in December 2022**, empowering the **Indian Coast Guard with enforcement powers and recognizing Gangetic & Indus River Dolphins as distinct species under Schedule I**.
- The **Project Dolphin Steering Committee** was reconstituted, with the **first committee meeting held on 6th September 2023**, where the **first edition of the Project Dolphin Newsletter** was launched.
- States have been urged to **align with International Whaling Commission regulations**, appointing **Dolphin and Whaling Commissioners** for conservation efforts.

Scientific Research & International Engagement

- **Population estimation of riverine dolphins** has been completed, with the report under finalization.
- A **meeting on Irrawaddy dolphins** was conducted in Odisha with the **Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change in attendance**.
- India participated in discussions on the **Global Declaration for River Dolphins (23-24 October 2023, Bogotá, Colombia)**, reinforcing its commitment to global dolphin conservation.

¹⁰ <https://moef.gov.in/wildlife-wl>

¹¹ <https://moef.gov.in/uploads/2022/01/National-Human-Wildlife-Conflict-Mitigation-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-of-India-2.pdf> p. 09

¹² <https://moef.gov.in/uploads/2023/05/Annual-Report-English-2023-24.pdf>, p.138-139

- **Chambal River Conservation Zone:** A 200 km stretch in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh has been recommended for designation as a Dolphin Conservation Zone for targeted protection efforts.

India's First-Ever Ganges River Dolphin Tagging: A Historic Conservation Milestone¹³

On 18th December 2024, India achieved a **groundbreaking milestone** by successfully **satellite-tagging the first-ever Ganges River Dolphin** (*Platanista gangetica*) in Assam under **Project Dolphin**. Led by the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** in collaboration with the **Assam Forest Department and Aaranyak**, and funded by the **National CAMPA Authority (MoEFCC)**, this initiative marks a **global first in dolphin conservation**.

- With **90% of the global population found in India**, knowledge gaps on their movement and ecology have hindered conservation efforts.
- This initiative will **study their habitat use, migration patterns, and environmental stressors**, aiding better conservation strategies.

Technology & Future Steps

- **Advanced lightweight satellite tags** compatible with **Argos satellite systems** enable tracking despite dolphins' minimal surfacing time.
- Plans are underway to **expand tagging across other states**, creating a **comprehensive conservation roadmap**.

2.2 50 Years of Project Tiger: ¹⁴

Project Tiger, initiated in **1973**, has been India's **flagship conservation initiative**, successfully completing **50 years in 2023**. Focused on **tiger conservation through dedicated reserves and strict protection measures**, it has played a crucial role in **reviving tiger populations**. Marking this milestone, the **Prime Minister inaugurated a commemorative event in Mysuru, Karnataka, on April 9, 2023**. As per the **5th cycle of All India Tiger Estimation 2022**, India now hosts **over 70% of the world's wild tiger population**, reaffirming its **leadership in global tiger conservation**.

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>
India's Share of Global Wild Tigers	Over 70%
Minimum Tiger Population	3,167
Estimated Upper Limit	3,925
Average Population	3,682
Annual Growth Rate	6.1%

India has reaffirmed its position as a **global leader in tiger conservation**, with the **tiger population rising to 3,682** (range 3,167-3,925) as per the **All India Tiger Estimation 2022**, marking a **steady increase from 2,967**

¹³<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2085865#:~:text=This%20monumental%20effort%20underscores%20India's,the%20protection%20of%20endangered%20species.&text=by%20PIB%20Delhi,Today%20marks%20a%20historic%20achievement%20in%20wildlife%20conservation%20as%20the,has%20been%20tagged%20in%20Assam>

¹⁴<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1991620>

in 2018 and 2,226 in 2014. The population is growing at **6.1% per annum** in consistently sampled areas.¹⁵

To commemorate **50 years of Project Tiger**, the Prime Minister released key reports, including the ‘**Amrit Kaal Ka Vision for Tiger Conservation**’, the **5th cycle of Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of Tiger Reserves**, and the **official summary of All India Tiger Estimation 2022**. A commemorative coin was also issued.

Major Conservation Efforts

Tiger Reserve Expansion & Management

- **India** now has **54 tiger reserves**, covering over **78,000 sq. km (2.30% of the country’s geographical area)**, with **Rani Durgavati Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh)** being the latest addition.
- **MEE 2022** assessed **51 reserves**, ranking 12 as ‘Excellent’, 21 as ‘Very Good’, 13 as ‘Good’, and 5 as ‘Fair’.

Reintroduction of Tigers in Extinct Areas

- Tigers have been **reintroduced in Rajaji (Uttarakhand), Madhav (Madhya Pradesh), Mukundra Hills (Rajasthan), and Ramgarh Vishdhari (Rajasthan) Tiger Reserves**, with plans for **Buxa Tiger Reserve** next.

Global Conservation Recognition & Collaboration

- **23 Indian tiger reserves** are now **CA/TS-accredited**, ensuring **global best practices in conservation**, with **six new reserves receiving accreditation this year**.
- **Pench and Satpura Tiger Reserves** received the prestigious **Tx2 Award** for doubling their tiger populations.
- **India** signed MoUs with **Cambodia** for **tiger reintroduction** and held bilateral discussions with **Bangladesh** for transboundary conservation in the **Sundarbans**.

2.3 International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Becomes a Treaty-Based Organization¹⁶

The **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** officially became a **treaty-based intergovernmental organization** on **January 23, 2025**, with **Nicaragua, Eswatini, India, Somalia, and Liberia** ratifying the agreement. With **27 countries onboard**, IBCA aims to drive global big cat conservation through cross-border collaboration.

About IBCA

- Launched by PM Narendra Modi **on April 9, 2023**, during the **50 Years of Project Tiger** event.
- **Union Cabinet** approved its establishment **in February 2024**, with headquarters in **India**.
- **Founded by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under MoEFCC on March 12, 2024**.

¹⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2076921>

¹⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2099279>

- Focuses on the conservation of **seven big cat species: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.**

Key Objectives & Impact

- Enhances global collaboration among governments, conservationists, and NGOs.
- Establishes a central fund and technical hub for research and conservation efforts.
- Strengthens habitat protection, anti-poaching strategies, and wildlife law enforcement.
- Combats illegal wildlife trade and promotes sustainable conservation practices.
- Integrates climate change mitigation into conservation strategies.

With IBCA's legal status now formalized, it marks a **historic milestone in global big cat conservation**, fostering **stronger international cooperation to protect these apex predators and their ecosystems.**

In collaboration with **Kaziranga National Park** and **Tiger Reserve**, the IBCA organized an executive course on capacity building for wildlife and conservation practitioners, bringing together officials from **27 countries**, underscoring the shared global commitment to wildlife conservation and sustainable development.¹⁷

2.4 Project Cheetah

Project Cheetah is a landmark wildlife conservation initiative launched on **September 17, 2022** aimed at reintroducing cheetahs to India after their extinction in the **late 1940s and early 1950s**. As the world's first intercontinental large wild carnivore translocation project, it **operates under** the umbrella of **Project Tiger** and aligns with **the Cheetah Action Plan** to restore and conserve the species. Efforts are underway to expand suitable habitats, ensuring long-term survival and ecological balance in India's grassland ecosystems.

Key Achievements:

- **Transcontinental Relocation:** In **September 2022**, **eight cheetahs** from **Namibia** were translocated to **Kuno National Park**, followed by **twelve cheetahs** from **South Africa** in **February 2023**.¹⁸
- **Successful Adaptation:** The majority of these cheetahs have adapted well to their new environment, exhibiting natural behaviours such as hunting, territory establishment, and mating. Notably, a **female cheetah** gave birth to cubs on Indian soil after **75 years**, with one surviving cub reported to be six months old and showing normal growth patterns as of September 2023.¹⁹ On 3rd January, 2024 three cubs were born to **Namibian Cheetah Aasha** at the **Kuno National Park**.²⁰
- **Community Engagement:** The project has actively involved local communities, providing direct and indirect employment opportunities. **Over 350 'Cheetah Mitras' (Cheetah Friends)** from surrounding villages have been engaged to educate the public on cheetah behaviour and human-wildlife conflict mitigation, fostering peaceful coexistence.²¹

2.5 Project Elephant:

India, home to over **60% of the global Asian elephant population**, has undertaken significant measures to

¹⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102196>

¹⁸ <https://moef.gov.in/uploads/2023/05/Annual-Report-English-2023-24.pdf>, p.16

¹⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958158>

²⁰ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1992752>

²¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958158>

protect and conserve these majestic animals. **Project Elephant**, launched by the Government of India, is a flagship initiative aimed at ensuring the long-term survival of elephants in their natural habitats. This program focuses on **habitat preservation, human-elephant conflict mitigation, and the welfare of captive elephants**, reflecting India's deep-rooted cultural and ecological commitment to elephant conservation.²²

Key Achievements and Initiatives

1. **Growing Elephant Population**: India's wild elephant population has increased from **26,786 (2018 census) to 29,964 in 2022**, reinforcing the country's successful conservation efforts.²³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Elephant Population in India</u>
2018	26,786
2022	29,964

2. **Expanding Protected Areas**: India has **33 Elephant Reserves across 14 states**, covering a vast **80,777 km²**, ensuring elephants have safe migratory corridors and protected habitats.²⁴

3. **Integrated Wildlife Protection**: Elephant Reserves are often **overlapping with Tiger Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Reserved Forests**, ensuring comprehensive protection under multiple forest and wildlife laws.²⁵

4. **Financial Investment in Conservation**: Under the **15th Finance Commission cycle**, the Government has approved a total outlay of **₹2,602.98 crores** for wildlife conservation, with **₹236.58 crores specifically allocated for Project Elephant** to strengthen conservation measures and reduce human-elephant conflicts.²⁶

2.6 Conservation of the Asiatic Lion in India

The **Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)**, once teetering on the brink of extinction, has witnessed a **remarkable resurgence** in India, primarily within **Gir National Park** and its surrounding landscapes in Gujarat. This conservation success is attributed to **dedicated efforts by the Government of India**, the Gujarat State Government, and local communities.

Key Initiatives

- **Project Lion:**²⁷

Launched as a flagship initiative, **Project Lion** focuses on:

- **Landscape ecology-based conservation**, ensuring sustainable lion habitats.
- **Habitat restoration** and securing additional areas for lions.
- **Community participation**, creating livelihood opportunities for local residents.
- **Disease management**, establishing India as a global hub for big cat health research and treatment.

²² <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/wildlife-conservation-success-stories-india-s-efforts-in-protecting-endangered-species>

²³ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057291>

²⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1948084>

²⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1986211®=3&lang=1>

²⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057291>

²⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152002&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>

Significance and Achievements

1. Population Recovery:²⁸

Through rigorous conservation efforts, the Asiatic lion population has shown a consistent upward trend:

- **2010: 411 lions**
- **2015: 523 lions**
- **2020: 674 lions**

2. Increased Conservation Funding:²⁹

The Gujarat Government has steadily increased its financial commitment to lion conservation, ₹155.53 crore in 2023-24.

3. International Recognition:³⁰

Due to India's conservation initiatives, the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** reclassified the Asiatic lion from “Critically Endangered” to ‘Endangered’ in 2008, acknowledging the success of India’s efforts.

2.7 Conserving the One-Horned Rhinoceros in India

The Government of India has implemented several strategic initiatives to conserve and protect the one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), leading to significant achievements in their population recovery and habitat preservation,

Key Conservation Initiatives:

- **National Conservation Strategy for the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros (2019):** Launched by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** in 2019, this strategy aims to repopulate rhinoceros populations in areas where they previously existed by augmenting existing conservation efforts through scientific and administrative measures.³¹
- **Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020:** This program focuses on increasing the rhino population and expanding their distribution by **translocating individuals to suitable habitats**, thereby enhancing **genetic diversity** and reducing the risk of **localized threats**.³²

Impact and Achievements:

- **Population Growth:** As of 2022, **Kaziranga National Park**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, is home to **2,613** greater one-horned rhinoceroses, reflecting effective conservation efforts.³³
- **Global Significance:** Assam's rhino population accounts for approximately **68%** of the world's greater one-horned rhinoceroses, underscoring the state's pivotal role in global conservation.³⁴
- **Community Engagement:** Initiatives such as **World Rhino Day** celebrations in **Kaziranga National Park** involve **local communities and raise public awareness** about rhino conservation, fostering a

²⁸ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102700>

²⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152002&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>

³⁰ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102700>

³¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1657772®=3&lang=1>

³² <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1657772®=3&lang=1>

³³ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102196>

³⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102196>

collective sense of responsibility towards protecting this iconic species.³⁵

3. Habitat and Ecosystem Conservation

- **Digitization of Flora, Fauna and herbarium records:** In 2024, the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** and **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** has carried out the digitization of **16500** specimens with **45000** images of the **Type and Non-Type of Indian Faunal** specimens. ZSI has completed faunal documentation from **27 States** and Union Territories as well as all of the **10 Biogeographic Zones** across the country. Data of **6124 springs** in **11 IHR States** and **1 UT (J&K)** has been geo-tagged spatially online on the **HIMAL Geo portal**.³⁶
- **Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI):** Launched on **World Environment Day 2024**, MISHTI focuses on the restoration of mangroves to bolster coastal sustainability. Approximately **22,561 hectares** of degraded mangroves have been restored across **13 states and union territories**.³⁷
- **National Mission for Green India (GIM):** As part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change, GIM was launched in February, 2014 aiming to protect, restore, and enhance India's forest cover, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.³⁸
- **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):** This centrally sponsored scheme provides financial and technical assistance to state and union territory governments for wildlife conservation activities. The scheme encompasses the development of wildlife habitats, **Project Tiger, and Project Elephant, with a total outlay of ₹2,602.98 crores** for the **15th Finance Commission cycle**.³⁹

4. Research and Monitoring

- **Advanced Research Facilities:** In **December 2024**, the **MoEFCC** inaugurated a **Next Generation DNA Sequencing facility** at the **Wildlife Institute of India** in Dehradun. This facility enhances research capabilities in wildlife genetics, aiding in the development of effective conservation strategies.⁴⁰

5. Community Involvement and Awareness

- **'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Campaign:** Launched on **World Environment Day 2024**, this initiative encourages individuals to plant trees in **honour** of their **mothers and Mother Earth**. By **December 2024**, over **102 crore trees** had been planted under this campaign, with a target of **140 crore trees** by **March 2025**.⁴¹
- **World Wildlife Day Celebrations:** The **2024 World Wildlife Day**, themed **“Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation,”** was celebrated at **Okhla Bird Sanctuary**. The event featured eco-trails, poster-making competitions, and interactive sessions to raise awareness about wildlife conservation.⁴²

³⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057597>

³⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1989495®=3&lang=1>

³⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2088406>

³⁸ <https://moef.gov.in/about-the-mission>

³⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057291>

⁴⁰ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2086834>

⁴¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2088406>

⁴² <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2011117>

6. Conservation of Marine Species

- **National Marine Turtle Action Plan**: Released by the MoEFCC, this plan focuses on the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats along the Indian coastline.⁴³
- **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019**: This regulation emphasizes the conservation of **ecologically sensitive areas** such as **mangroves, coral reefs, and turtle nesting grounds**, ensuring their protection from unregulated developmental activities.⁴⁴

7. Combating Wildlife Crime

- **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**: Established to **combat organized wildlife crime**, the WCCB coordinates enforcement actions, gathers intelligence, and assists in international efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade. Between **2019 and 2023**, the WCCB conducted **166 joint operations** in the North Eastern Region, leading to the arrest of **375 wildlife offenders**.⁴⁵

Key Announcements by the Government of India on World Wildlife Day 2025⁴⁶

- **Release of India's first-ever riverine dolphin estimation report**, covering 28 rivers across eight states. Encouragement of local community participation in dolphin conservation.
- Foundation stone laid for the **National Referral Centre for Wildlife** at Junagadh to enhance coordination in wildlife health management.
- Establishment of a **Centre of Excellence** at the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII) – SACON, Coimbatore** to tackle human-wildlife conflict.
- Deployment of **Rapid Response Teams** with advanced tracking technology, surveillance systems, and AI-driven intrusion detection.
- Collaboration between **Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, and BISAG-N** to enhance **forest fire prediction, detection, prevention, and control** using space technology.
- Integration of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)** for wildlife conservation and conflict mitigation.
- New sites identified for cheetah reintroduction, including **Gandhisagar Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) and Banni Grasslands (Gujarat)**.
- Announcement of a **Tiger Conservation Scheme** focused on protecting tigers and co-predators outside traditional tiger reserves.
- Launch of a dedicated **Project on Gharials** to address their dwindling population.
- Announcement of a **National Great Indian Bustard Conservation Action Plan** to upscale conservation efforts.
- Documentation and research on **India's traditional forest and wildlife conservation practices** using AI.
- Expansion of India's engagement with the **United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** for enhanced international cooperation.

Conclusion

India's unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is reflected in a series of transformative initiatives that blend tradition with cutting-edge technology. From strengthening flagship programs like **Project Tiger** and **Project Elephant** to pioneering new conservation efforts for species such as the gharial and the Great Indian Bustard, the Government has

⁴³ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2040035>

⁴⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2040035>

⁴⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2082536>

⁴⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2107778>

adopted a holistic and science-driven approach. The integration of **artificial intelligence**, **geospatial mapping**, and **community-led conservation** underscores India's global leadership in biodiversity preservation. The remarkable resurgence of endangered species, strengthened legal frameworks, and a strategic integration of technology underscore the Government of India's proactive approach to environmental stewardship. Moreover, India's collaboration with **international organizations**, **multilateral bodies**, and **conservation partners** has reinforced its leadership in addressing global biodiversity challenges. By fostering cross-border cooperation, leveraging scientific innovation, and ensuring community participation, India continues to drive a holistic and inclusive conservation agenda. As we mark **World Wildlife Day 2025**, the nation reaffirms its resolve to **protect and restore ecosystems**, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

References

- <https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1896391725708403019>
- <https://wildlifeday.org/en>
- <https://x.com/DDNewsLive/status/1896437460567228532/photo/3>
- <https://iucn.org/our-work/region/asia/countries/india>
- <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/eb/sbe28.pdf>
- https://wii.gov.in/nwdc_aboutus
- <https://moef.gov.in/wildlife-wl>
- <https://moef.gov.in/uploads/2022/01/National-Human-Wildlife-Conflict-Mitigation-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-of-India-2.pdf>
- <https://moef.gov.in/uploads/2023/05/Annual-Report-English-2023-24.pdf>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2085865#:~:text=This%20monumental%20effort%20underscores%20India's,the%20protection%20of%20endangered%20species.&text=by%20PIB%20Delhi,Today%20marks%20a%20historic%20achievement%20in%20wildlife%20conservation%20as%20the,has%20been%20tagged%20in%20Assam>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1991620>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2076921>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2099279>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102196>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958158>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1992752>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958158>
- <https://www.ibef.org/blogs/wildlife-conservation-success-stories-india-s-efforts-in-protecting-endangered-species>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057291>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1948084>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1986211®=3&lang=1>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=152002&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102700>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1657772®=3&lang=1>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2102196>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057597>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1989495®=3&lang=1>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2088406>
- <https://moef.gov.in/about-the-mission>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2086834>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2011117>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2040035>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2082536>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2107778>

Santosh Kumar / Sheetal Angral / Vatsla Srivastava