



Conservation of Vultures

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Why in News



Recently, **150 vultures were seen in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), Bihar**, which has prompted a vulture conservation plan in the protected region of VTR.

Key Points

- **About Vultures:**

- It is **one of the 22 species of large carrion-eating birds** that live predominantly in the **tropics and subtropics**.
- They act an important function as **nature's garbage collectors** and help to keep the environment clean of waste.
 - Vultures **also play a valuable role in keeping wildlife diseases in check**.
- India is home to **9 species of Vulture** namely the **Oriental white-backed, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Himalayan, Red-headed, Egyptian, Bearded, Cinereous and the Eurasian Griffon**.
 - Most of these 9 species face danger of extinction.
 - Bearded, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Oriental white-backed are protected in the **Schedule-1 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972**. Rest are protected under '**Schedule IV**'.

- **IUCN status:**

Sr. No.	Name of the Vulture Species	IUCN status	Pictorial Representation
1.	Oriental White-backed Vulture (Gyps Bengalensis)	Critically Endangered	
2.	Slender-billed Vulture (Gyps	Critically	

	Tenuirostris)	Endangered	
3.	Long-billed Vulture (Gyps Indicus)	Critically Endangered	
4.	Egyptian Vulture (Neophron Percnopterus)	Endangered	
5.	Red-Headed Vulture (Sarcogyps Calvus)	Critically Endangered	
6.	Indian Griffon Vulture (Gyps Fulvus)	Least Concerned	
7.	Himalayan Griffon (Gyps Himalayensis)	Near Threatened	
8.	Cinereous Vulture (Aegypius Monachus)	Near Threatened	
9.	Bearded Vulture or Lammergeier (Gypaetus Barbatus)	Near Threatened	

- **Threats:**

- Poisoning from diclofenac that is used as a medicine for livestock.
- Loss of Natural Habitats due to anthropogenic activities.
- Food Dearth and Contaminated Food.
- Electrocution by Power lines.

- **Conservation Efforts:**

- Recently, the Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change launched a **Vulture Action Plan 2020-25** for the conservation of vultures in the country.
 - It will ensure minimum use of Diclofenac and prevent the poisoning of the principal food of vultures, the cattle carcasses.
 - The Vulture Safe Zone programme is being implemented at eight different places in the country where there were extant populations of vultures, including two in Uttar Pradesh.
 - To upscaling conservation **four rescue centres will be opened** like Pinjore in the north, Bhopal in central India, Guwahati in Northeast and Hyderabad in South India.
 - The ministry has now also launched **conservation plans for the red-headed and Egyptian vultures**, with breeding programmes for both.
- To study the cause of deaths of vultures in India, a **Vulture Care Centre (VCC)** was set up at Pinjore, Haryana in 2001.
- Later in 2004, the VCC was upgraded to being the first **Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centre (VCBC)** in India.

At present, there are nine Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centres (VCBC) in India, of which three are directly administered by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).

Valmiki Tiger Reserve

- **Location:**

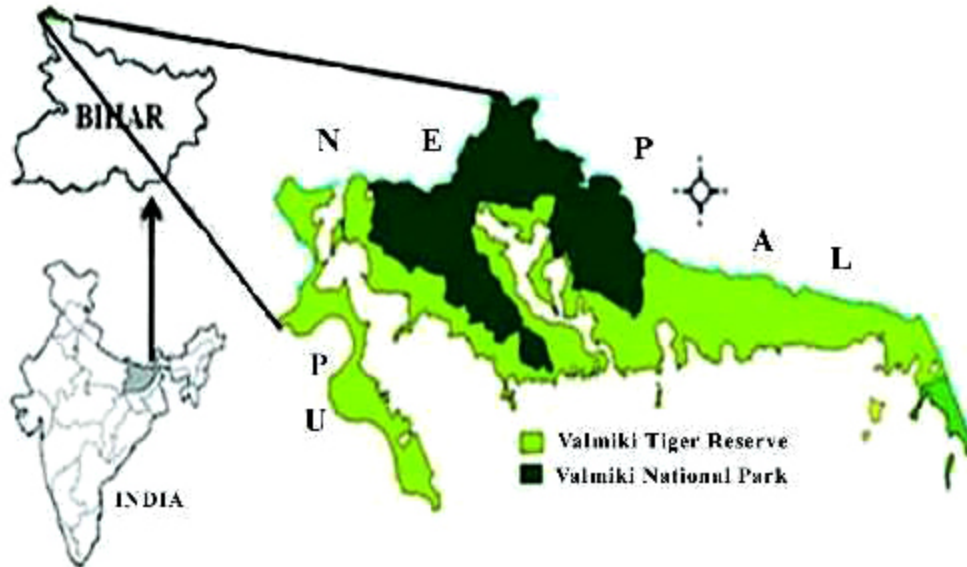
- located at the **India-Nepal border** in the **West Champaran district of Bihar**.
- It **forms the easternmost limits of the Himalayan Terai forests** in India.
- Situated in the **Gangetic Plains bio-geographic zone** of the country, the forest has a combination of bhabar and terai tracts.

- **Establishment:**

This was established in March 1994 under **Project Tiger**.

- **Biodiversity:**

- The wildlife found in the forest of National Park are the Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, black bear, Indian sloth bear, otter, Indian leopard, wild dog, buffalo, and boar.
- Also Indian flying foxes can be sighted here.
- The Reserve has rich avifauna diversity. Over 250 species of birds have been reported.
- **Tharu', a scheduled tribe**, is the dominant community in the landscape of the Valmiki National Park.



Other Protected Areas in Bihar:

- Bhimbandh Sanctuary.
- Rajgir Sanctuary.
- Kaimur Sanctuary.
- Kanwar Jheel Bird Sanctuary.
- Vikramshila **Gangetic Dolphin**.
- Gautambudha Sanctuary.

Source: DTE