



Awards for Tiger Conservation

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Why in News

The **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR - Uttar Pradesh)** has bagged international award **TX2** for doubling the number of tigers in the past four years.

- Also, the **Transboundary Manas Conservation Area or TraMCA (India-Bhutan border)** has received the **Conservation Excellence Award for 2020**.
- Earlier, **India's 2018 Tiger census** (once in every four years) had set a **Guinness record** for being the largest camera-trap wildlife survey.

Key Points

About the Awards:

- Launched recently, these awards **were open to submissions from any site in a tiger range country** that has achieved remarkable measurable progress since 2010.
 - **Site:** An area having a functional tiger population, legally designated as a "site" under national legislation.
- Award winners were announced on 23rd November 2020 - the **10 year anniversary for the global TX2 goal**.
- Sites **will receive a small financial grant** to be used to further tiger conservation.
- **TX2 Award:** It goes to **one site that has achieved remarkable and measurable increase in its tiger population** since 2010.
- **Conservation Excellence Award:** This award recognises one site that has achieved excellence in **two or more of these five themes:**
 - Tiger and prey population monitoring and research (tiger translocation/prey augmentation),
 - Effective site management,
 - Enhanced law enforcement & protection & ranger welfare improvement,
 - Community based conservation, benefits and human-wildlife conflict mitigation and
 - Habitat and prey management.

TX2 Goal

- The TX2 goal is a **global commitment to double the world's wild tigers by 2022**.
- The goal has been **set by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** through the **Global Tiger Initiative, Global Tiger Forum** and other critical platforms.
- All **13 tiger range governments** came together for the first time at the **St Petersburg Summit** (Russia -2010) where they committed to double the number of wild tigers by 2022.
- **Tiger Range Countries include** India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.
 - **Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*)** is categorised as '**Endangered**' under the **IUCN Red List** and is listed under **Appendix I of CITES**.
 - **Global Tiger Day** is observed on **29th July** across the world.
 - **India's Project Tiger was launched in 1973** with 9 tiger reserves. Tiger has been listed under '**Schedule I**' of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.

- **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve:**

- **Location:** Pilibhit district, Lakhimpur Kheri District and Bahraich District of **Uttar Pradesh**

The northern edge of the reserve **lies along the Indo-Nepal border** while the southern boundary is marked by the **river Sharada and Khakra**.

- **Declaration:** PTR was declared in **2014-15** on the basis of its special type of ecosystem with vast open spaces and sufficient feed for the elegant predators. PTR is one of the finest examples of the exceedingly diverse and productive **Terai ecosystems** (low-lying land at the foot of the Himalayas).

- **Features:**

- The study done by **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** shows that **Dudhwa-Pilibhit population has high conservation value** as it represents the only tiger population with the ecological and behavioral adaptations of the tiger unique to the Terai region.
- It is **home to** a habitat for over 127 animals, 326 bird species and 2,100 flowering plants.
 - Wild animals include tiger, swamp deer, Bengal florican, hog deer, leopard, etc.
 - It has high sal forests, plantation and grasslands with several water bodies.

- **Bagged TX2 Award:** The number of tigers in the reserve area **has gone up to 65 from 25** in the period of just four years (2014-18).

- **Other Protected Areas in Uttar Pradesh:**

- **Dudhwa National Park**
- Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary
- Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary
- Sur Sarovar (Keethan) Bird Sanctuary

- **Transboundary Manas Conservation Area:**

- **Formation:** It was **conceptualized in 2011** with the vision to jointly develop and manage a transboundary conservation area between Bhutan and India, for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- **Features:**
 - The TraMCA landscape with an area of over 6500 sq. km forms a vital mosaic of conservation spaces **across the Eastern Himalayas**, and covers the entire Manas Tiger Reserve in India, four protected areas in Bhutan and also two biological corridors.
 - The **Manas Tiger Reserve in India and Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan** form the core of this biologically outstanding trans-boundary region that is **home to tigers, elephants, rhinos** and more than 1,500 species of mammals, birds and vascular plants.
 - The **Manas River** flowing through Royal Manas National Park and Manas National Park also **makes both parks an important watershed area** in the region.
 - The landscape and its surroundings **support over 10 million people** in India and Bhutan with its services.
- **Bagged Conservation Excellence Award:** For **efforts** to increase the tiger population. The **recognition** was for the TraMCA comprising the 500 sq. km. **Manas National Park in Assam** and the 1,057-sq. km. **Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan.**

The number of Tigers in the Indian Manas **increased from 9 in 2010 to 25 in 2018** while that in the **Bhutan Manas more than doubled from 12 in 2008 to 26 in 2018.**

Source: TH