



# Similipal Biosphere Reserve: Odisha

## Why in News?

Recently the Forest Administration and [SHGs \(Self Help Groups\)](#) have started an awareness Campaign to manage fires in [Similipal Biosphere Reserve](#) this year.

- Earlier, scientists unravelled the mystery behind Odisha's [‘Black Tigers’ in Similipal Tiger Reserve \(STR\)](#).

## What are the Key Points?

### ▪ About:

- Similipal derives its name from **‘Simul’ (silk cotton) tree**.
- It was formally designated a tiger reserve in 1956 and brought under [Project Tiger](#) in the year 1973.
- It was **declared a biosphere reserve** by the Government of India in **June, 1994**.
- It has been part of the [UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserve](#) since 2009.
- It is part of the **Similipal-Kuldiha-Hadgarh Elephant Reserve** popularly known as [Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve](#).
- It is prone to forest fires. In **2021**, the Similipal saw a [major fire](#) between **February-end and early March**.

### ▪ Location:

- It is situated in the **northern part of Odisha’s Mayurbhanj district**. Geographically, it lies in the eastern end of the [eastern ghat](#).

### ▪ Coverage:

- The biosphere spread over 4,374 sq. km. has 845 sq. km. of core forest (tiger reserve), 2,129 sq km buffer area and 1,400 sq km of transition space.

### ▪ Vegetation:

- Similipal has 1,076 flowering species and 96 species of orchids.
- It boasts of having **tropical semi-evergreen forests, tropical moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous hill forests**.

### ▪ Tribes:

- Two tribes, the Erenga Kharias and the Mankirdias, inhabit the reserve’s forests and practise traditional agricultural activities.

### ▪ Wildlife:

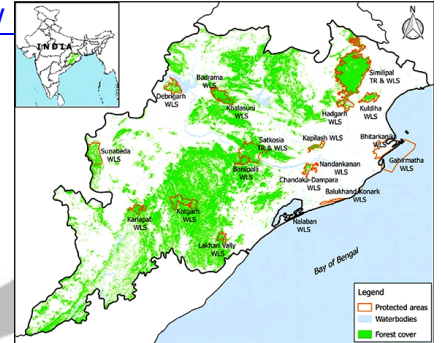
- Similipal is home to a wide range of wild animals including tigers and [elephants](#), besides 304 species of birds, 20 species of amphibians and 62 species of reptiles.

## What causes Fires and Mitigation?

### ▪ Forest Fires:

- **Natural:** Natural causes such as lightning or even soaring temperatures can sometimes result in [forest fires here](#).
- **Man Made Factors:** Instances of poaching and hunting wherein the poachers set a **small patch of forest on fire to divert the wild animals.**
- **Mitigation Strategies:**
  - Forecasting fire-prone days and including community members to mitigate incidents of fire, creating fire lines, clearing sites of dried biomass, and crackdown on poachers.

## What are the Other Major Protected Areas in Odisha? //



- [Bhitarkanika National Park](#)
- **Badrama WLS**
- [Chilika \(Nalaban island\) WLS](#)
- **Hadgarh WLS**
- [Baisipalli WLS](#)
- **Kotagarh WLS**
- [Nandankanan WLS](#)
- **Lakhari Valley WLS**
- [Gahirmatha \(Marine\) WLS](#)

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