



Protected Areas

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

A recent study highlights the importance of [Protected areas \(PAs\)](#) in **balancing conservation with [community livelihoods](#)**.

What are Protected Areas?

- **About:** A protected area in India is a **designated region** focused on conserving biodiversity and protecting wildlife from human interference.
 - India has a network of **over 1,000 Protected Areas**, including **107 National Parks**, covering approximately **5.32%** of the country's **total geographical area**.
 - These areas are categorized into **different types**, each with varying levels of protection and regulation.
- **Different Types of Protected Areas:**
 - **National Parks:** National Parks are the **most strictly protected areas in India**, offering the highest level of legal protection.
 - Declared under the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#), these parks **prohibit all human activities** except for **scientific research and controlled tourism**.
 - Activities such as mining, logging, and grazing are strictly prohibited.
 - While the **State Government is primarily responsible** for their management, bodies like the [National Wildlife Board \(NWLBB\)](#) and [National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) may also oversee specific projects, especially for species like tigers.
 - **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Wildlife Sanctuaries, also established under the WPA, 1972, allow **more flexibility than National Parks**.
 - Certain human activities, such as **grazing and the collection of forest products, are permitted**, as long as they do not harm wildlife.
 - These sanctuaries are managed by the **State Forest Departments**, with support from wildlife organizations and experts.
 - **Conservation Reserves:** Conservation Reserves are **designated areas under the WPA that aim to protect wildlife and biodiversity** while allowing **controlled human activities** such as grazing and firewood collection.
 - These reserves are **intended to buffer critical habitats**, protect wildlife corridors, and conserve biodiversity outside of heavily protected zones.
 - They allow local communities to participate in conservation efforts while maintaining sustainable livelihoods.
 - The **State Government** oversees these areas, with active involvement from local stakeholders and conservationists.
 - **Community Reserves:** Community Reserves are areas that **involve direct participation from local communities in conservation efforts**.
 - These reserves can be established on **private or community-owned land and aim to enhance biodiversity** conservation and sustainable resource management.

- Activities like **tourism, agriculture, and small-scale forest product extraction are allowed**, provided they support conservation goals.
- The management of these reserves is carried out by the **State Government**, with significant input from local communities and NGOs.

Key Regulatory Authorities for Protected Areas in India

- **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC):** [MoEFCC](#) Responsible for wildlife conservation, policy formulation, and funding for protected areas. The Wildlife Division ensures compliance with the **Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972**.
- **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL):** Advisory body that provides recommendations on conservation, approves new protected areas, and evaluates projects near protected zones.
- **State Forest Departments:** Manage protected areas within their jurisdiction, enforce protection laws, and monitor wildlife populations. They also implement the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**.
- **Wildlife Protection Societies and NGOs:** Organizations like **Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)** and [WWF India](#), play a key role in on-ground protection, monitoring illegal activities, and advocating for stronger conservation efforts.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Under which Schedule of the Constitution of India can the transfer of tribal land to private parties for mining be declared null and void? (2019)

- (a) Third Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Ninth Schedule
- (d) Twelfth Schedule

Ans: (b)

Q. Under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, who shall be the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forest rights or both? (2013)

- (a) State Forest Department
- (b) District Collector/Deputy Commissioner
- (c) Tahsildar/Block Development Officer/Mandal Revenue Officer
- (d) Gram Sabha

Ans: (d)