

26 – 07 – 2023

News: Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

- Recently, in a significant development for tiger conservation efforts, the Goa bench of the **Bombay High Court** has issued a directive to the Goa government to notify the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas as a tiger reserve under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 within three months from 24th July 2023.
- Tiger Reserves are notified by State Governments as per provisions of Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 on advice of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

- Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the **Northern part of Goa, Sanguem taluka, near Valpoi town.**
- It encompasses **picturesque waterfalls, including Vazra Sakla Falls and Viridi Falls.**
- Mhadei is known for **its nesting grounds of critically endangered Long-billed vultures near Vazra Falls.**

- Diverse landscape with thick moist deciduous forests and some evergreen species.
- It is also notable for sacred groves protecting rare and indigenous trees.

Flora and Fauna

- Rich biodiversity with Indian gaur, Tigers, Barking deer, Sambar deer, Wild boar, Indian hare, and more.
- Attracts herpetologists due to the presence of various snakes, including the 'big four' venomous snakes which are Indian krait, Russell's viper, Saw-scaled viper and Spectacled cobra.
- Mhadei has been declared as a Designated International Bird Area (IBA) for hosting several bird species like Malabar parakeet and Rufous babbler.
- Represents a crucial habitat for tiger conservation in Goa.

Unique Geographical Features

- Home to the three highest peaks in Goa: Sonsogod (1027 mts), Talavche Sada (812 mts), and Vageri (725 mts).
- Mhadei River, a lifeline of Goa, originates in Karnataka, passes through the sanctuary, and meets the Arabian Sea at Panaji.
- The sanctuary acts as a catchment area for the Mhadei River.

- Recently, the **Bombay high court** has directed the State government of Goa to declare **Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary** as a designated Tiger Reserve.

Tillari Conservation Reserve

- Tillari is the **seventh wildlife corridor** in Maharashtra to be declared as a 'conservation reserve'.
- Tillari is a reserve in **Western Ghats**.
- The area covering nine villages in the forest range is known to serve as a corridor and even as a habitat for the population of tigers and elephants moving between the three states of **Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra**.
- It connects **Mhadei sanctuary in Goa and Bhimgad in Karnataka**.
- It has **semi-evergreen forest, tropical moist deciduous forests**, and a number of unique trees, butterflies, and flowers.
- Recently, **a king cobra was sighted on Tillari**.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is constituted under **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (amended in 2006)**.

- It was **established in 2005** December following the recommendations of Tiger Task Force.
- It was an **executive body** and later given statutory status after the amendment of Wildlife Protection Act in 2006.
- NTCA along with **Wildlife Institute of India**, in collaboration with state forest departments **conducts the Tiger Census once in 4 years**.
- It also **conducts the leopard census once in 4 years**.
- NTCA is headed **by Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.