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News: Translocation of tigers

- Recently, the **Odisha** government translocated a tigress named Jamuna from **Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Odisha.**
- Translocation was aimed at **enhancing genetic diversity in Similipal**, where there are concerns about inbreeding due to a small population.
- The Odisha Tiger Estimation conducted in 2024 found **a total 24 adult tigers in Similipal, pseudo-melanistic tigers being 13 of them.**
- STR is the only habitat where these black tigers are found in the wild.
- The **high number of pseudo-melanistic tigers in Similipal raises concerns about inbreeding and lack of genetic flow, prompting the need for external genetic input.**

Similipal National Park

- Similipal National Park is a national park and a tiger reserve in the Mayurbhanj district in the Indian state of **Odisha** covering 2,750 km². Geographically, it lies in the **eastern end of the eastern ghat.**

- It is part of the **Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve**, which includes three protected areas — **Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Hadgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- 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**.
- This protected area is **part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009**.
- Simlipal National Park derives its name from the **abundance of red silk cotton trees** growing in the area.
- It is the **7th largest national park in India**.
- The park is home to **Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, and chausingha** along with some of the beautiful waterfalls like **Joranda and Barehipani Falls**.
- The Odisha Tiger Estimation conducted in 2024 found a **total 24 adult tigers in Similipal, pseudo-melanistic tigers being 13 of them**.
- The **high number of pseudo-melanistic tigers in Similipal** raises concerns about **inbreeding and lack of genetic flow, prompting the need for external genetic input**.
- Recently, the **Odisha government translocated a tigress named Jamuna from Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to the Similipal Tiger Reserve**.

- The **high hills surround Meghasani/Tunkiburu, the highest peak in the park.**
- At least **12 rivers cut across the plain area.** The prominent among them are Budhabalanga, Palpala Bhandan, Kharkai River and Deo.
- Simlipal comes under a **high cerebral malaria-prone zone.**
- Simlipal forests are home to a variety of tribes. Prominent among these are **Kolha, Santhala, Bhumija, Bhatudi, Gondas, Khadia, Mankadia and Sahara.**
- Also, the period from January-April coincides with the **Akhand Shikar ritual** of many forest dwelling communities during which, the **Adivasis usually clear the ground bushes and grasses by setting them on fire to enhance their visibility in the forest.** Among others, this is said to be **one of the causes of forest fires** in the Simlipal national park.
- Recently a newly constituted **Panda committee under the Tribal Affairs Ministry** is to look into the issue of forest rights of the Mankadia tribe in Simlipal Tiger Reserve. **Mankadia is one of the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha.** They critically **depend on making rope with siali fibre that is richly available in Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR).** They were denied habitat rights inside STR under Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006.
- The Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR) is the **only tiger habitat in the world with melanistic tigers, which have broad black stripes running across their bodies**

and thicker than those seen on normal tigers. Recently, scientists have unraveled the mystery behind these 'Black Tigers'.

- Recently the Forest Administration and SHGs (Self Help Groups) have started an awareness Campaign to manage fires in Simlipal.