



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY / PROJECT TIGER

Statutory Body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
(Government of India)

Kawal Tiger Reserve

The Kawal Tiger Reserve is located in the Telangana State along the banks of river Godavari, forming part of the Deccan peninsula-central highlands. The reserve is nestled in the Sahyadri Mountain Ranges, and has diverse habitat comprising of dense forests, grasslands, open areas, rivers, streams and water bodies.

Area of the Tiger Reserve

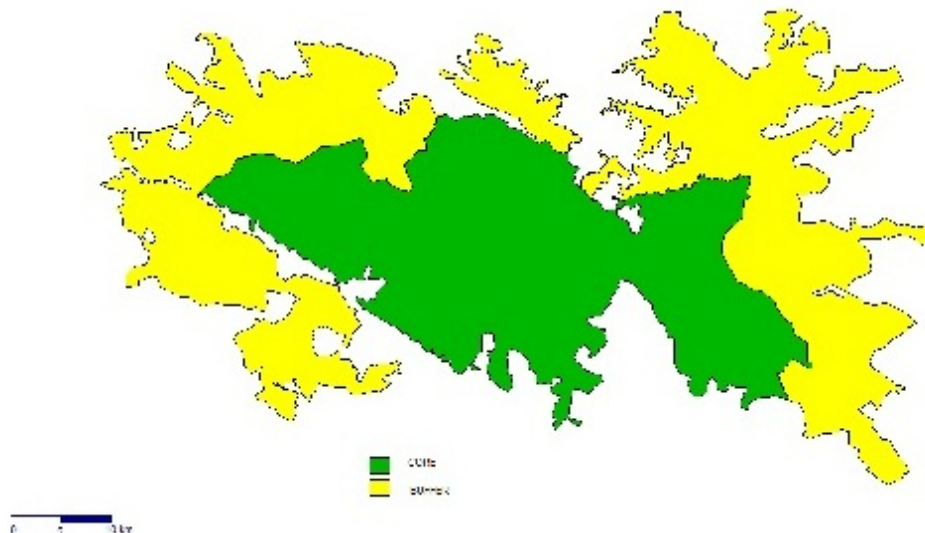
Core	: 892.23 Sq.Kms
Buffer	: 123.12 Sq.Kms.
TOTAL AREA	: 1015.35 Sq.Kms.

Location

Latitudes : 18⁰ 59' to 19⁰ 28'N

Longitude : 79⁰ 15' to 79⁰ 28' E

Map



Habitat attributes:

Geographically the reserve is situated in the southern-most tip of the Central Indian Tiger Landscape, having linkages with the Tadoba-Andhari (Maharashtra) and Indravati (Chhattisgarh)

tiger reserves. Thus, the habitat has tremendous significance for tiger conservation in the region. It is also a major catchment of river Godavari and local rivulets like Peddavagu and Kadam.

Flora

Biogeographically Kawal falls under the Deccan Plateau Zone (Zone VI). The forest vegetation of the core has been classified as “Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest: Dry Teak Series and Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forests Series” (Champion and Seth, 1968). Teak is found extensively along with Bamboo. As many as 673 plant species have been recorded, and the important ones are *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Mitragyna parviflora*, *Terminalia crenulata*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Boswellia serrata*, *Sterculia urens*, *Terminalia belerica*, *Madhuca indica*, *Cleistanthus collinus*, *Lannia coromondilica*, *Butea monosperma*, *Calycopteris floribunda*, *Zizyphus oenophile* and *Acacia intisia*. The important grass species include: *Heteropogon contortus*, *Apluda mutica*, *Saccharum spontaneum*, *Oplismenus composites*, *Dicanthium annulatum* and *Themeda* species. The reserve has considerable weed growth of *Cassia tora*, *Hytis suovalens*, *Cleome viscosa* and *Lantana camara*.

Fauna

Kawal has a faunal diversity which is typical of the Deccan Plateau. Zoo-geographically, the reserve comes under the Indo-Malayan region, and the major wild animals include: nilgai, chousinga, chinkara, black buck, sambar, spotted deer, wild dog, wolf, jackal, fox, tiger, leopard and the jungle cat.

Besides, there are 23 orders of insects, 10 species of amphibians belonging to three families, viz. *Bufo*idae, *Rana*idae and *Rhacophoridae*; 34 species of reptiles out of which 14 belong to order *Testudines*, 13 to order *Sauria* and 7 to order *Serpentes*. As many as 260 species of avifauna belonging to 18 Genera, 51 families and 75 species of Mammals belonging to the orders of Insectivore (2), Chiroptera (25), Primates (4), Carnivora (17), Artiodactyla (10), Rodentia (15), Lagomorpha (2) are found.

Tiger Status

The reserve has a low tiger density at present but has a tremendous potential as a source area with stepped up protection and habitat amelioration under Project Tiger.

Core

Kawal has been recently notified as a tiger reserve, with tremendous scope for consolidating the core area vis-à-vis the guidelines of Project Tiger. The important managerial thrust areas include stepped up protection through reinforced protection infrastructure in the form of patrolling camps, wireless network, foot patrolling and vehicular patrols. Further, the core area needs to be made inviolate through voluntary relocation of human settlements to foster a viable population of tiger.

Buffer

The buffer has a multiple use agenda to address co-occurrence of wild animals and people. The

livelihood options to people are important through ecologically sustainable viable options through sectoral integration. The wildlife concerns need to be mainstreamed in forestry operations.

Corridor

The Kawal Tiger Reserve has connectivity to the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra in the North and to the Indravati tiger reserve of Chhattisgarh towards its North-Eastern side. Portions of the Bellampalli territorial division (Kukkudhatti-Ada area) borders Maharashtra. Likewise, forests of Bijjur and Kagaznagar have connectivity towards the Chapparala Wildlife Sanctuary of Maharashtra leading to Indravati Tiger Reserve (Chhattisgarh).

Managerial Issues

Sand mining, poaching, destruction of teak forests, migratory cattle, vehicular disturbance, lack of water and fodder were major threats in the reserve. As sand is not available in nearby villages / towns mining of sand was the major issue. Motivation by political leaders, staff and villages controlled the situation to some extent, however it is a constant threat. The presence of teak and bamboo is a constant threat for habitat destruction due to felling and smuggling. The threats have been controlled due to establishment of base camps in the interior forest areas and deploying strike force and antipoaching squads. All vehicular traffics are prohibited during 9.00 PM to 6.00 AM in the roads passing through the tiger reserve. Heavy vehicles of certain categories are prohibited at all times in the roads passing through Kawal Tiger Reserve.

Fire is another managerial issue to be tackled as the entire area is fire prone and burns almost twice in the season.

Regarding habitat improvement, attempts have been made to improve the status of water availability in the reserve by increasing the number of percolation tanks, check dams, by repairing old structures, and repairing the major breached tanks, maintenance of saucers and natural water holes. Though the rain fall varies between 900 mm to 1100 mm, entire rain water drains into river Godavari within hours due to slope.

55%-60% of area is occupied by *Cassia tora*, *Hyptis suaveolens* and *Lantana camara*. Attempts have made to reduce the dominance to expose the ground and to improve the status of grasses / fodder in the reserve.

There are 10-12 villages inside the core area and has huge disturbance which need to be relocated. This is a Herculean task as the villagers do not understanding the advantages of relocation. NGO's intervention is required to motivate people to relocate. Once the villages are relocated the issues of meadows and fodder problem may be solved in addition to making the area inviolate.

Good Practices

Strengthening field protection, tiger monitoring using camera traps and habitat amelioration.