



NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY / PROJECT TIGER

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

SIMILIPAL TIGER RESERVE

Similipal Tiger Reserve is located within the Mayurbhanj District, in the Northern-most part of Odisha. The terrain is mostly undulating and hilly, interspersed with open grasslands and wooded areas. The inclined plateau has risen abruptly from the low coastal plains of the District. The steep side faces the Bay of Bengal and run northwards to finally merge with Chhota Nagpur. The water level is high and the tract is woven with perennial water sources converging into rivers like Budhabalanga, Salandi and many tributaries of Baitarani river flowing from the Reserve.

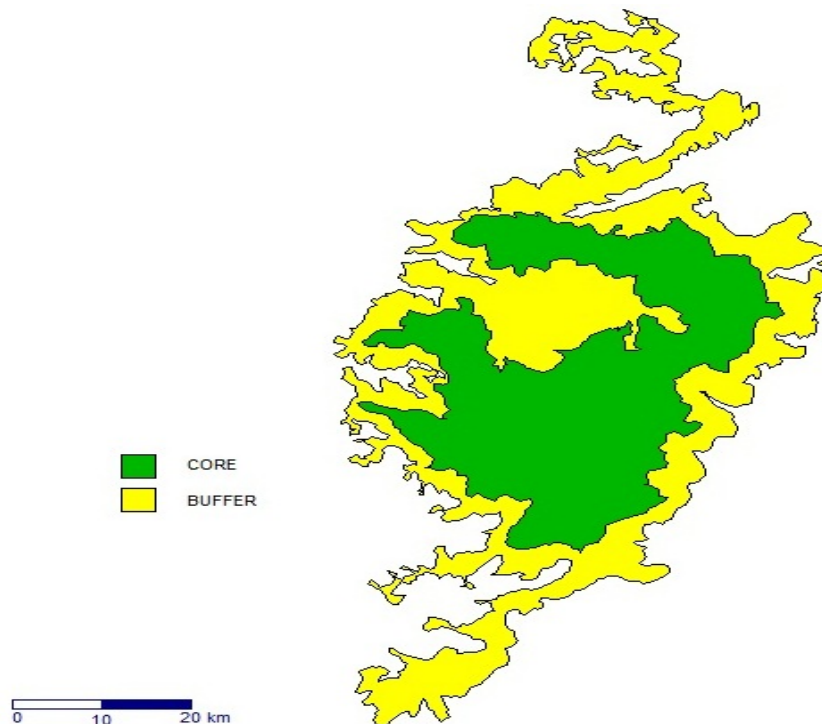
Area of the tiger reserve

Core/critical tiger habitat	:	1194.75
Buffer/peripheral area	:	1555.25
Total	:	2750.00 sq.km.

Location

Latitudes	:	21 ⁰ 31' N to 22 ⁰ 02' N
Longitudes	:	86 ⁰ 06' E to 86 ⁰ 36' E

Map



Habitat Attributes

Flora

Similipal comes under the Deccan Peninsular Bio-geographic Zone, Chhotanagpur Province and Mahanadian Region. The forest is predominantly moist mixed deciduous forest with tropical semi-evergreen forest in areas with suitable microclimatic conditions and sporadic patches of dry deciduous forests and grasslands. Some patches of old plantations of tropical pines and *Eucalyptus* are also present.

Similipal harbours a unique blend of Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats and Sub-Himalayan plant species. The floristic composition indicates a connecting link between South Indian and North Eastern Sub-Himalayan Species. The landscape supports 1076 plant species with 94 species of orchids of which three species are endemic.

Northern Tropical Moist Deciduous Forest: It is found all over except the moist valleys and on the southern and eastern aspects of the hills

Dry Deciduous Hill Forests: Found mostly in eastern and southern Similipal with steep and exposed slopes.

High Level Sal Forest: Occurs in plateaus above an elevation of 850m

Grassland and Savanna: Spread over in small patches found on hill tops over 900m high as well as in frosty valleys and nallah banks.

Fauna

The rich diversity of habitat and mosaic of landscapes with wide altitudinal and climatic variation in Similipal supports a fascinating faunal composition. There are 55 species of mammals, 361 species of birds, 62 species of reptiles, 21 species of amphibians, 38 species of fishes, 164 species of butterflies and many species of insects and micro fauna.

Herbivores: Similipal harbours the largest population of elephants (*Elephas maximus*) in Odisha. Indian Bison (*Bos gaurus*) is found in few localised pockets in herds ranging from 8 to 20. The major deer species found in Similipal are Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), Chital (*Axis axis*), Barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjac*) and Mouse deer (*Moschiola meminna*).

Carnivores: The major carnivores include Tiger and Leopard. Others are Leopard cat, Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Wolf, Jackal and Hyaena.

Other significant mammalian species of Similipal include Ratel, Civet, Giant Squirrel, Flying squirrel, Mongoose, Pangolin, Hare, Langur and Rhesus Macaque.

Reptiles: A significant population of Mugger Crocodile is present in the river system and perennial streams of Similipal. The snake species found in the habitat are Python, King Cobra, Common Cobra, Krait and Viper and several others.

Birds: There are 361 species of birds and common ones are Peafowl, Jungle Fowl, Partridge, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Grey Hornbill, Hill Myna, Parakeets, Sun Birds, Crested Serpent Eagle, Oriole, Tree Pie, Minivet, Wagtails and Pipits. The water birds include White Ibis, Spoonbills, Red Wattled Lapwings, Teal, Plover, River Tern, Herons, Egrets and Kingfishers.

Tiger Status

The reserve has a good source population of tigers. As per the 2010 country level assessment the estimate was 23 (12-34).

Core

Out of the Critical Tiger Habitat of 1194.75 km², the old core area (Proposed National Park) of 845.70 km² is under the direct control of the Field Director and the remaining area is under three territorial Divisions namely, Baripada, Karanjia and Rairangpur. Voluntary relocation of three villages from the core area is important. Grasslands occupy less than one percent of the core. The area available after relocation of Jenabil village has been developed as meadow.

Buffer

The buffer area comprises partly of Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary and Reserved Forests. There are 65 revenue villages inside the buffer area. Three territorial DFOs namely, Baripada, Karanjia and Rairangpur have territorial jurisdiction over the buffer area. Ecotourism in Similipal is restricted mostly to buffer. The reserved forests were subjected to past working for timber exploitation, besides plantations. The forestry operations at present include extraction of dead, dry and fallen trees from the annual coupes from the areas outside the sanctuary as per prescriptions of working plans.

Corridor

The important connectivity with Similipal Tiger Reserve are patches of forests connecting Similipal TR to Badampahar R.F. in the west, Kuldiha Sanctuary in the south-eastern side and up to Atai RF in Keonjhar District in the south-western side. During the 2010 country level assessment of tigers, a potential connectivity between Similipal and Satkosia Tiger Reserve has been identified. This connectivity lies on the south-western part of the Reserve and was an earlier migration route between two large elephant habitats of Odisha i.e., Similipal and Satkosia. The migration route covers districts like Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack and Keonjhar. In course of time, this connectivity has fragmented and its restoration is important.

Managerial Issues

Similipal Tiger Reserve is subjected to high anthropogenic pressure due to presence of 68 villages within the Reserve (mostly in the buffer) and about 1200 villages in the periphery. The local people have the unique tradition of ritual mass hunting called *Akhand Shikar*. Control of this practice is a major challenge to the management which requires elaborate strategic planning and mobilization of staff in large number. Implementing Eco Development programmes in the buffer villages to involve

people and build up the support of stake holders against any negative impact on biodiversity is another important issue.

Good Practices .

1. An innovative programme called “Friends of Similipal Tigers”, where volunteers from schools are encouraged.
2. to disseminate the message of wildlife conservation.
3. A dog squad has been created for detection of poaching cases.
4. Rights of all the inhabitants staying inside the Core area were settled in 2013 following due procedures under the FRA.