

# Supreme Court on Tiger Safaris of 'Jim Corbett National Park'

written by iasexam.com | 08/03/2024



## Context

The Supreme Court rapped the Uttarakhand government for felling trees and carrying out illegal construction in Jim Corbett National Park. The Supreme Court only allowed safaris in Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand, but that too in the peripheral and buffer zones and not in the core areas.

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- The tiger safaris are only allowed to operate near the national park in support of wildlife conservation activities and to reduce interference from the core habitats.
- The core part of this national park is divided into core and buffer zones, along with reserve forests and the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary in the buffer area.
- With India home to 75% of the world's wild tiger population, it is represented by a paltry 54 tiger reserves. It therefore has the highest number of tigers—260 tigers—all attributed to the Jim Corbett National Park in the state of Uttarakhand, hosting a total of 319 tigers using the reserve.

## About Jim Corbett National Park

- **Locality & History:** The Corbett National Park lies in the Nainital and Pauri Garhwal Districts of the state of Uttarakhand in India.
  - Hailey National Park: First national park of India, established in the year 1936.

- Afterwards, its name was changed to Jim Corbett National Park, named after one of the most renowned British hunters, naturalists, and authors of many books.
- Jim Corbett National Park, established in the year 1936 as Hailey National Park, is the first and foremost national park of India.
  - And, a part of the great Corbett Tiger Reserve, the park is proud of its efforts in saving the Bengal Tiger, an endangered species. It was given the limelight of being included in Project Tiger in 1973.
- **Eco Significance:** This park forms a part of the much larger Corbett Tiger Reserve and is known for the poorly sighted reserve and its rare Bengal tigers.
    - The varied landscape in the park, including rolling savannah grassland, hills, riverine belts, marshy depressions, and a huge lake within its boundaries, distinguishes numerous flora and fauna species.
  - **Biodiversity:** Besides tigers, the park is home to several other species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and plants.
    - Notable species include Asian elephants, leopards, Indian python, and several species of deer and kingfishers.
  - **Conservation:** Discussions can be carried around the park—ways of conservation, Project Tiger (launched in 1973), and the hard toils of wildlife management, human-animal conflicts, and tourism.
  - **Sustainable Tourism:** Perhaps the approach to tourism followed by the park and relevance for conservation and local communities.
    - It's a model of ecotourism that balances environmental sustainability with visitor needs.
  - **Legislation and Policies:** Awareness about the knowledge of the legal framework through which national parks are governed in India; such as guidelines stated in the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), the Forest Conservation Act (1980), and other policies ruling over the environment.

## Case Studies

- The Supreme Court is considering a petition against the capture of wild animals in national parks and, in a way, has given its sanction to the setting up of tiger safaris in some areas with conditions.
- “The Court, therefore, is very much concerned about the balance between the promotion of tourism and protection of the environment within the Jim Corbett National Park.

## Consequences of tourism

- Unregulated tourism in such sensitive areas may cause damage to the environment. Loss and fragmentation of habitats, as well as blocking the main routes of tigers and elephants, may be caused therein.
- This disturbs natural behaviours, creates a lot of stress, and has a reproductive success impact on wildlife.
- The tourism activities themselves are a source of pollution from gas emissions of the vehicle and discharges of waste in the environment, which is able to reduce habitats, harm animals, and water quality.

## Conclusion

- The Jim Corbett National Park in India is the country's first national park and a key part of the Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- It plays a vital role in conserving wildlife, especially the Bengal tiger, and has been a significant contributor to Project Tiger since 1973.
- The park's diverse flora and fauna, as well as its varied terrain, make it a valuable ecosystem and a popular spot for ecotourism.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

### ***UPSC Prelims Practice Question***

***Q. Which river valley forms a significant part of the Jim Corbett National Park?***

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><i>a. Ganga</i></b>    | <b><i>b. Yamuna</i></b> |
| <b><i>c. Ramganga</i></b> | <b><i>d. Kosi</i></b>   |

Ans - "c"