

## Similipal National Park

**Prelims (GS I)** – *Current events of national and international importance| Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

**Mains (GS I)** – *Conservation*

### Why in news?

*Recently, the Odisha government officially notified Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) as a National Park.*

- **Similipal National Park** – Is the 107<sup>th</sup> national park in India and 2<sup>nd</sup> national park in Odisha.

*Similipal is also a wildlife sanctuary, tiger reserve, UNESCO biosphere reserve and elephant reserve.*

- **Location** – Similipal in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.
- **Vegetation** – Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests, Semi-Evergreen Forests, Dry Deciduous Forests, Grasslands.
- **Fauna of Similipal National Park:**
  - Royal Bengal tigers (*Panthera Tigris*) - 40
  - Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) - 25% of Odisha's elephant population
  - Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)
  - Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*)
  - Mugger Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*)
  - 360 species of birds

*The tigers of Similipal possess higher-than-normal levels of melanin, giving them coats that are blacker with yellow stripes and are described as pseudo-melanistic tiger.*

## Flora of Similipal National Park

Sal (*Shorea robusta*)

Orchids (104 species)

Mahua (*Madhuca indica*)

Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*)

*The pseudo-melanistic tiger is a colour variant of the Bengal tiger and its strange coat is a result of a mutation in a particular gene.*

### Greater Similipal Landscape Programme

- It is a conservation *initiative by the Odisha Forest Department* to conserve Similipal national park and its surrounding ecological corridors.
- **Key Components of the programme:**
- ***AI-powered camera towers*** systems for real-time wildlife monitoring and poaching prevention.
- *V-SAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) communication* networks to ensure surveillance in remote, connectivity-challenged zones.
- Diversifying Tiger population by introduction of two female tigers from Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) and to increase tiger population to 100 by 2036.
- **Community Engagement** - Integrated with the Ama Similipal Yojana, which focuses on:
  - Livelihood enhancement and skill training for local tribal communities (e.g., Kolha, Santhala, Khadia).
  - Promotion of *eco-tourism and cultural tourism* to generate income while raising conservation awareness.

### Reference

[The Indian Express| Similipal designated Odisha's second national park](#)