

# India's conservation roadmap in its fight against the climate crisis

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India's efforts at protecting wildlife and their habitat offer a blueprint to the world

Wildlife conservation in India has made significant strides over the past decade. The period has been marked by ambitious initiatives aimed at preserving species and restoring degraded habitats.



A notable success in the realm of conservation has been the resurgence of iconic species. (Shutterstock)

According to the India State of Forest Report 2023, the country's total forest and tree cover increased by 1,445 sq km, bringing green cover to 25.17% of its land area – comprising 21.76% forest cover and 3.41% tree cover – since 2021. According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s *State of World's Forest 2024*, India ranks third globally in average annual forest area gain, adding an impressive 266,000 ha each year from 2010 to 2020. According to

FAO's *Global Forest Resource Assessment 2020*, India, with 72.16 lakh ha of forest cover, ranks among the top 10 countries.

On the protected-area front, India now maintains 1,022 protected areas, encompassing 178,640 sq km – or 5.43% of its geographic territory – which includes national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves, community reserves, and several of them enjoy the status of tiger reserves and elephant reserves. Community and conservation reserves have increased from 115 in 2014 to 343 in 2024 and 37 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries have been added after 2014, making for a total of 106 national parks and 573 wildlife sanctuaries. To date, 474 eco-sensitive zones have been established across India. This deliberate expansion of formal protection alongside ambitious afforestation efforts reflects a dual strategy – securing habitat for wildlife and restoring green cover.