

## **Augmentation program in Buxa tiger reserve**

### **Why in news?**

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Recently National Tiger Conservation Authority identified Buxa tiger reserve in West Bengal for the tiger augmentation programme.

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### **What is the significance of Buxa tiger reserve?**

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- It has notified as a tiger reserve in 1983, located in Alipurduar district of West Bengal, parts of which border Bhutan.

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- The reserve is located very close to Assam's Manas Tiger Reserve.

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- Buxa consists of moist, deciduous and evergreen forests.

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- It is home to at least 68 species of mammals, 41 species of reptiles and more than 246 species of birds, four species of amphibians, 73 species of fishes and over a hundred species of butterflies and moths.

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- The herbivore list includes elephants, Indian gaur, chital, sambars, barking deer and hog deer.

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### **How the augmentation program will be done?**

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- Forest Department officials claimed there were tigers in the reserve, almost no sighting of the big cats raised questions about their presence.  
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- The survey of tigers in 2011 based on DNA analyses of scat put the number of tigers at 20.  
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- The initial plan is to introduce six tigers at Buxa.  
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- Experts have consciously decided not to augment tigers in the Buxa reserve from the Sunderbans, a completely different mangrove ecosystem.  
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- Instead, tigers from the forest reserves of Assam, which have a similar flora and fauna, will be introduced in Buxa.  
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- Experts believes that tigers are migrating from nearer Manas wildlife sanctuary through Buxa-Bhutan corridor.  
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### **What are the challenges?**

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- The introduction of tigers is a challenge to forest officials as there is human habitation in the area.  
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- There are also common clouded leopards, jungle cats and fishing cats,

which occasionally surface in the tea gardens nearby.

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- Chances of wild animals getting killed while crossing the tracks are high, as broad gauge rail line is passing through the reserve.

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- Tourist accommodations run by both the forest department and private operators, in the reserve possess high threat to tiger habitat.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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