

Guru Ghasidas National Park

Famous for its varied availability of flora and fauna, **Guru Ghasidas National Park**, also known as Sanjay National Park, is a national park located in the Koriya district of Chhattisgarh and Sidhi, Singrauli districts of Madhya Pradesh. The entirety of the national park covers a massive area of 466.657 square km. It is also a major part of the Narmada Valley dry deciduous forests ecoregion, as well as a part of the Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve.

History of Guru Ghasidas National Park

Location of Guru Ghasidas National Park Chhattisgarh Area

The Sanjay National Park was founded in 1983 as the Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve to work towards the protection of tigers. The entire reserve was located in Madhya Pradesh before Chhattisgarh was named a separate state in 2000. A large part of the entire tiger reserve was now under the Chhattisgarh Government, which decided to rename these parts of the National Park after Guru Ghasidas. In June of 2011, Jairam Ramesh, the Minister of State for Environment and Forests, proposed to the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Raman Singh, to recognise the establishment as a tiger reserve.

The Guru Ghasidas National Park, Chhattisgarh, has been sharing five tigers with Madhya Pradesh since 2010. Further, the Asiatic Cheetah was last spotted in this National Park, which was also its last known territory in India.

Madhya Pradesh Region

The Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve was named so, as the tiger reserve was part of both the Sanjay National Park, as well as the Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary. The entirety of these landmasses covers more than 831 square km of area in the Sidhi District.

Finally, the results of an official census carried out in Madhya Pradesh in 2004 showed that the National Park was home to at least six tigers. Sadly, however, these tigers have not been spotted since October 2008.

Wildlife Found in Guru Ghasidas National Park

The Guru Ghasidas National Park is teeming with various species of flora and fauna, which makes it a major spot of attraction in Chhattisgarh.

Flora

The Guru Ghasidas National Park is mostly covered by a mix of sub-tropical and deciduous forests. The primary species of flora that covers the National Park is the Sakhua or Sal trees. Other species of

vegetation found are teak, Saja, Salai, Mahua, Sisham, Kari, Gurjan, Achar, Tendu, and Bamboo, amongst several others.

Fauna

The national park and tiger reserve is teeming with wildlife of all sorts and is home to a varied and healthy ecosystem. Starting from mammals like tigers, leopards, nilgai, jackal, antelope, wild boar, bison, hyena porcupine, and various other species, the Guru Ghasidas National Park is also filled with bird species like parakeets, bulbuls, Rufus treepie, red-headed vulture, and racket-tailed drongo. Additionally, various species of reptiles like the cobra, monitor lizard, and python have also made this park their home.

India's Newest Tiger Reserve: The Fourth in Chhattisgarh

Very recently, on the 5th of October 2021, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approved the requests of the Chhattisgarh Government to declare two forest areas as reserve forests- i. Guru Ghasidas National Park and ii. Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary.

The eleventh technical Committee of the NTCA took a month to consider the idea proposed by the Chhattisgarh Government on the 1st of September and granted their request under Section 38V(1) of The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 in the first week of October.

As argued by many wildlife experts and activists, the significance of this decision is very important, as it allows for the tigers to move between the Bandhavgarh and Palamau Tiger Reserves by connecting Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.