

New elephant reserve, India's 33rd, to come up in Uttar Pradesh

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The Centre has approved setting up **Terai Elephant Reserve (TER)** at **Dudhwa-Pilibhit** in Uttar Pradesh under Project Elephant.

- The TER is the third new elephant reserve with the other two **Lemru in Chhattisgarh** and **Agasthyimalai in Tamil Nadu** under Project Elephant.
 - **The Project Elephant** is a centrally sponsored scheme which supports elephant conservation in the country.



[ref: WWF.org]

Terai Elephant Reserve

- Spread over **3,049 sq. km area**, it will be **India's 33rd Elephant Reserve**
- It will have protected areas, forest areas and corridors for conservation of wild elephants.
- It will be developed in the joint forest areas of **Dudhwa and Piliphit tiger reserves** including **Kishanpur and Katarniaghat** wildlife sanctuaries
 - It will cover the conservations of four wild species such as:
 - Tiger,
 - Asian elephant,
 - Swamp deer
 - One-horned rhinoceros
- The reserve through **implementing human-elephant conflict mitigation strategies** will protect villagers living in the **Indo-Nepal border** areas of **Uttar Pradesh**.
- It will also be beneficial for the two tiger reserves in terms of managing grassland and corridor maintenance.

Current status of the Elephant Reserves

- All the **33 elephant reserves** put together cover a total area of nearly **80,000 sq. km**.
- **Tamil Nadu and Assam** have the **highest** number of elephant reserves with five each in both the states, followed by four in Kerala, Three in Odisha and:
 - Two each in:
 - Uttar Pradesh,
 - Arunachal Pradesh,
 - Chhattisgarh,
 - Karnataka,
 - Nagaland
 - West Bengal,
 - One each in:

- Andhra Pradesh,
- Jharkhand,
- Meghalaya
- Uttarakhand.

About Indian Elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*)

- It is one of four extant recognised subspecies of **the Asian elephant** and native to mainland Asia.
- Elephant has been recognized as a **National Heritage Animal of India**.
- India has the largest population of **Asian elephants** with 30,000 wild and about 3,600 captive ones.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I.**
- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered.
 - The Asian elephant is threatened by habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation.

Distribution and Habitat

- The **Indian elephant** is native to mainland Asia:
 - India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Laos, China, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
 - It is regionally extinct in Pakistan.
- It inhabits grasslands, dry deciduous, moist deciduous, evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.