

## Status of Forest Cover in Project Tiger Reserves

The Project Tiger was launched in the year 1973 with the main object to ensure maintenance of a viable population of tigers in India and to preserve, for all time, areas of biological importance as a national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people. The intensive protection and habitat development effort registered good success and the area started being identified as repository of our bio-diversity.

FSI undertook a study in 1992-93 to assess the changes in the vegetation cover of 18 Tiger Reserves during the period between 1983 and 1989. Diapositive imagery in false colour composite from the Landsat on 1:1 million scale for the period 1983 formed the input for vegetation Mapping of the year 1983. The scene on 1:1 million scale was enlarged to 1:250,000 scale with the help of Large Format Optical Enlarger. The assessment of the forest cover for the period 1989 was based on the interpretation of Landsat imagery on 1:250,000 scale. The following broad forest cover classes were delineated by visual interpretation of the imagery:

1.	Dense Forest	-	Crown density more than 40%
2.	Open Forest	-	Crown density between 10 to 40%
3.	Scrub	-	Tree lands with less than 10% crown density
4.	Non-forests	-	Non-forest areas which included agriculture land, forest blanks/grassland/water bodies.

The computation of area for both the periods in different categories was done using the dot grid template. The Study indicated that during these six years, the vegetation cover of many of the Reserves, which had been under the management of Project Tiger for a considerable time had improved. The results of this study are reproduced below:

**Table 4: Forest cover change assessment in tiger reserves (1983-89) (Area in Sq.Km.)**

Sl. No.	State	Tiger Reserve	Geog. Area	Forest Cover		
				1983	1989	Change (1983-89)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Nagarjunasagar	3568.00	2242.92	2524.98	282.06
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Namdapha	1808.00	1728.39	1719.21	-9.18
3.	Assam	Manas	470.00	209.02	215.92	6.90
4.	Bihar	Palamu	928.00	850.23	827.87	-22.36
5.	Bihar	Valmiki	880.00	721.92	727.39	5.47
6.	Karnataka	Bandipur	866.00	821.66	809.13	-12.53
7.	Kerala	Periyar	777.00	667.78	654.32	-13.46

8.	Madhya Pradesh	Indravati	1258.00	1155.89	1124.52	-31.37
9.	Madhya Pradesh	Kanha	940.00	787.43	788.74	1.31
10.	Maharashtra	Melghat	1597.00	1353.31	1338.16	-15.15
11.	Orissa	Similipal	845.00	823.59	823.59	0.00
12.	Rajasthan	Ranthombhore	392.00	260.00	286.00	26.00
13.	Rajasthan	Sariska	1145.00	637.97	626.23	-11.74
14.	Tamilnadu	Kalakad-Mundanthurai	800.00	691.16	630.00	-61.16
15.	Uttar Padesh	Corbett	521.00	477.50	477.50	0.00
16.	Uttar Padesh	Dudhwa	648.00	551.91	560.45	8.54
17.	West Bengal	Buxa	759.00	711.24	711.24	0.00
18.	West Bengal	Sunderbans	2585.00	1668.50	1662.85	-5.65
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20787.00</b>	<b>16360.42</b>	<b>16508.10</b>	<b>147.68</b>