Past and present status of the Indian Tiger in northern West Bengal, India: an overview

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ABSTRACT Changes in the distribution range and the estimates of Tiger (Panthera tigris) populations in northern West Bengal from the late 19th century to 2009 were examined in detail. According to a 2004 census there were 70 tigers in the region, while a 2008 estimate put the number at 8-12. The tiger survives only in protected areas of terai and duars extending over about 1000km2 of Buxa, Jaldapara, Neora Valley and Mahananda, the Panighat and Bamanpokhri Ranges of Kurseong Division and the Chilapata and Kodalbusty Ranges under Wildlife-III Division. Tigers became extinct in Chapramari Sanctuary about a decade back; Gorumara sightings were recorded up to the 1980s. The species has already lost about 1000km2 of its historic range in the territorial forest divisions of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Dinajpur and Malda Districts. The State Forest Department has undertaken efforts involving regular monitoring, protection measures and habitat improvements and tigers are now being sighted in areas where they were absent for years. Resident tigers appear to be expanding their ranges to new areas, sometimes at higher altitudes as in Neora Valley National Park and Buxa Tiger Reserve crossing into Bhutan and Sikkim.
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The current status of Indian Royal Bengal tigers is presented here. Check out Indian Bengal tiger current (present) status. Royal Bengal tiger is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, occupying the Bengal region. A small proportion of the total population is also seen occupying southern Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tibet and western Myanmar. However, all hopes came crashing to the ground when Cat Specialist Group reported the number of Bengal tigers in India, in 1994, to be somewhere between 2,750 and 3,750. Of these only 34% were within the boundaries of the then 19 (now 27) Project Tiger Reserves. As per the present status of the Indian Bengal Tiger, the population of the species is around 3,000 to 3,500.