

# Hotspots – World Heritage Sites – Biosphere Reserves – National Parks – Sanctuaries – Tiger Reserves

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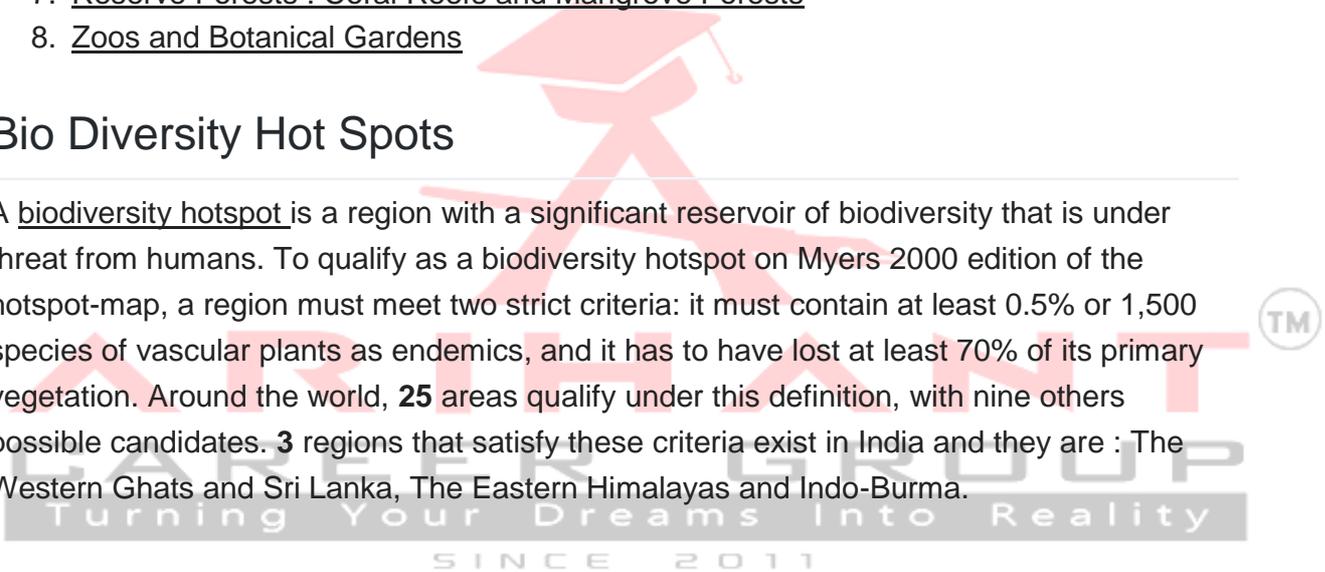
Bio Diversity Hot-spots, World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, National Parks, Wild Life Sanctuaries, Botanical Gardens : these related but confusing terms which denote areas where environment and wildlife are protected are important of UPSC Civil Services Prelims, Mains and Interview. Every student of environment is advised to update himself with the differences and latest statistics regarding these hot terms.

1. Bio Diversity Hot Spots
2. World Heritage Sites
3. Biosphere Reserves
4. National Parks
5. Wildlife Sanctuaries
6. Tiger Reserves
7. Reserve Forests : Coral Reefs and Mangrove Forests
8. Zoos and Botanical Gardens

## Bio Diversity Hot Spots

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A biodiversity hotspot is a region with a significant reservoir of biodiversity that is under threat from humans. To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot on Myers 2000 edition of the hotspot-map, a region must meet two strict criteria: it must contain at least 0.5% or 1,500 species of vascular plants as endemics, and it has to have lost at least 70% of its primary vegetation. Around the world, **25** areas qualify under this definition, with nine others possible candidates. **3** regions that satisfy these criteria exist in India and they are : The Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, The Eastern Himalayas and Indo-Burma.



## World Heritage Sites

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Sites on the World Heritage List are **cultural, natural or mixed properties** recognized by the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO) as being of outstanding universal value. There are **29 World Heritage Sites in India**, 23 are cultural sites and the other six are natural sites.

*As of date, there are **911 sites** under the World Heritage List, which cover 711 cultural sites, 180 natural sites and 27 mixed properties encompassing 152 countries.*

## Biosphere Reserves

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Biosphere Reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems which are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

Also read: Ramsar sites (Wetlands) in India: Memorize faster

The Indian government has established **18 Biosphere Reserves of India**, (categories roughly corresponding to IUCN Category V Protected areas), which protect larger areas of natural habitat (than a National Park or Animal Sanctuary), and often include one or more National Parks and/or preserves, along buffer zones that are open to some economic uses. Protection is granted not only to the flora and fauna of the protected region, but also to the human communities who inhabit these regions, and their ways of life.

## National Parks

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The National parks of India are IUCN category II protected areas. As of April 2012, there were **102** national parks in India and more parks on the process of getting commissioned.

## Wildlife Sanctuaries

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India has over **441** animal sanctuaries, referred to as Wildlife sanctuaries (IUCN Category IV Protected Area). Among these, the 28 Tiger Reserves are governed by Project Tiger, and are of special significance in the conservation of the tiger. Some wildlife sanctuaries are specifically named *Bird Sanctuary*, e.g. Keoladeo National Park before attained National Park status. Many National Parks were initially Wildlife Sanctuaries.

## Tiger Reserves

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There are more than 40 tiger reserves in India, which are governed by Project Tiger which is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

## Reserve Forests : Coral Reefs and Mangrove Forests

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There are 4 important areas of coral reefs and 34 mangrove forests in India.

## Zoos and Botanical Gardens

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Areas of artificial flora and fauna conservation.