

Kaziranga National Park

[UPSC Notes]

Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga National Park is known as one of the oldest reserves in India.

- It is located in the districts of Nagaon, Sonitpur, and Golaghat in Assam, India.
- Kaziranga's soil is rich in alluvial deposits because it is located in the Brahmaputra River floodplain.
- Small rivers flow through the park from east to west and drain into the Brahmaputra River.
- Kaziranga National Park covers 1030 km², and it is the largest secured area on Brahmaputra River's southern bank.
- Currently, the forest department of the Assam State Government administers Kaziranga National Park.

History of Kaziranga National Park

The history of Kaziranga National Park starts from the year 1905 when it was established as a 'Reserve Forest' and the main aim was to protect the Indian Rhinoceros and their habitat.

- In 1916 Kaziranga National Park was designated as a Game Reserve, and in 1950 it became a Wildlife Sanctuary.
- On January 1, 1974, Kaziranga National Park was designated as National Park.
- In 1985 it was designated as UNESCO 'World Heritage Site'.
- In August 2006, the Indian government approved the constitution of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve after a drop in Tiger Population.

Important Species Found in Kaziranga National Park

One of the main attractions of Kaziranga National Park is one-horned rhinos. Apart from that, Elephant Asiatic water buffalo and Royal Bengal Tiger are the main focus of this national park.

- As per the 2018 census, there are a total of 2,413 rhinos and approximately 1,100 elephants found in Kaziranga National Park.
- Kaziranga National Park is the home of 9 among the 14 species of primates in the Indian subcontinent.

- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world. Kaziranga National Park has the second highest number of Rhinos in Assam after Kaziranga.
- Kaziranga National Park has approximately 35 mammal species, and among them, 15 are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Kaziranga National Park has 103 tigers, and it is the ranking third in India after Jim Corbett and Bandipur National Park.

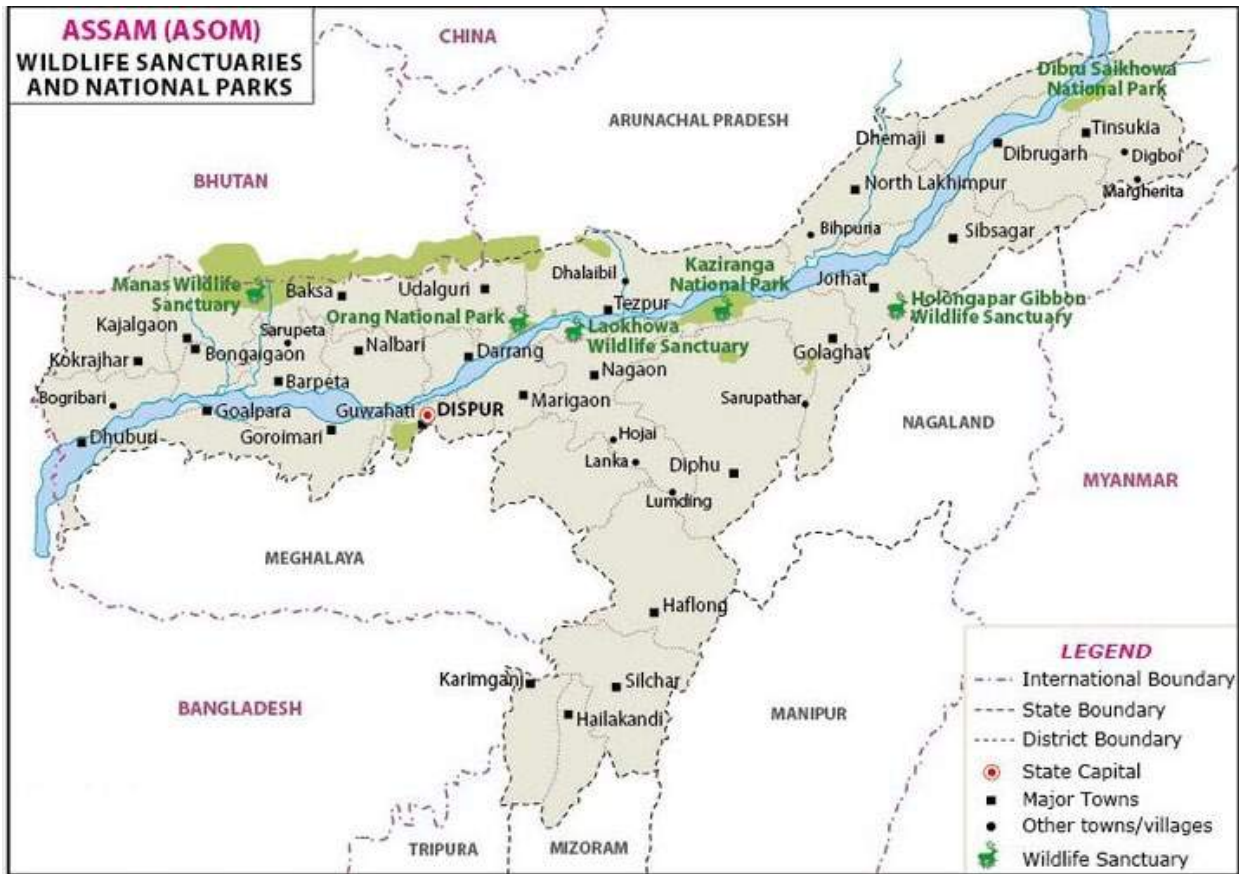
Floral Diversity in Kaziranga National Park

- Tall eggplant grass, dese broadleaf forests, Indian gooseberry, cotton tree, alluvial savanna woodlands, and marshland are spotted here.
- Kaziranga also includes numerous small bodies of water
- Wetlands, deciduous forests, and grasslands are also seen due to recurring floods.

Kaziranga National Park's One-Horned Rhinoceros

One-Horned Rhinoceros is listed in the IUCN Red List with Vulnerable. That's why keeping these Rhinoceros alive is now a priority.

- Kaziranga has half of the total population of Rhinos, which makes this national park a critical reserve.
- The one-horned rhino can be spotted by a single black horn of 9-25 inches long, and a grey-brown hide with skin folds.
- These one-horned rhinos graze grasses, leaves, and branches of fruit, aquatic plants, and tress.



Kaziranga National Park and Wetland Bird Census 2019

As per the Wetland Bird Census 2019 :

- Kaziranga National Park has recorded 96 species of wetland birds. It is one of the highest numbers for the wildlife reserves in India.
- The survey has noticed a rise in the species and number of birds over the years.
- The bar-headed goose has the highest share, followed by the northern pintail species.
- The survey has covered Bagori, Kohora, and Burapahar of the park.
- Other species in this park are Eurasian wigeon, gadwall, little cormorant, northern lapwing, spot-billed pelican, and ruddy shelduck.

Floods and Kaziranga National Park's Ecosystem

Floods play an important role in the maintenance of the tiger reserve's ecological system.

- Floods are the annual aspect of Kaziranga National Park.
- Flooding supports vegetation maintenance and also aids in the process of silt deposition and soil formation.

- The regenerative nature of the floods helps freshen the water bodies of Kaziranga and maintain the landscape as well.
- Flood water also becomes a breeding ground for fish.
- However, on the other hand, the Kaziranga National Park faces a huge task due to the flood problem in the Brahmaputra River every year.

Relationship between Kaziranga National Park and the Brahmaputra

The Brahmaputra is one of the most flood-prone rivers in India, and floods are common in this river during the monsoon season.

- One of the fun facts about Kaziranga National Park is, that every year the Brahmaputra river takes away a little portion of land from the park.
- On paper, the Kaziranga National Park is 1030 sq km in area, but in reality, the area is 884 sq km. It says the Park is shrunk over the years.
- Due to this the swamp deer, hog deer, wild boar, and other animals get affected because they fail to reach the higher place during floods.
- Despite this, Brahmaputra benefits the Kaziranga National Park more than it damages, and it contributes highly.

Challenges Faced by Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga National Park has many water bodies due to which the park gets flooded every year when it rains constantly.

- The eastern and northern parts of the park are the most affected areas because the mighty Brahmaputra runs through these areas. Soil erosion is one of the major issues during the summer floods.
- Poachers' killing of rhinos is another major challenge and threat to the Kaziranga National Park.
- The growing human population in the park's vicinity is also a concerning topic.
- Rapid growth in the urbanization of rhino habitats poses a challenge because it can lead to various harmful activities, like market constriction, agricultural expansion, etc.