

PLACES IN NEWS:

SHARAVATHI VALLEY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Location

- The **Sharavathi Valley Wildlife Sanctuary** is located in the **Shimoga (Shivamogga) district** of **Karnataka**, India.
- It lies in the **Western Ghats**, a global biodiversity hotspot, and encompasses the valley of the **Sharavathi River**.

Declared as Sanctuary

- The sanctuary was officially declared on **23rd November 1974**.
- It was established with the aim of preserving the rich biodiversity and forest ecosystems of the Sharavathi River basin.

Important Water Bodies

- **Tunga Anicut Dam:**
 - A prominent reservoir within the sanctuary area.
 - Supports populations of **otters** and diverse **aquatic bird species**.
- **Mandagadde Natural Bird Sanctuary:**
 - An **island on the River Tunga**, included as part of the sanctuary.
 - Recognized for seasonal bird nesting and breeding, especially during the monsoon.

Human Settlements

- The region has several **human habitations**, primarily consisting of families **displaced during the construction of the Sharavathi Hydroelectric Project** in the 1960s.
- These settlements are mainly involved in agriculture and forest-related livelihoods, often putting pressure on the sanctuary ecosystem.

Vegetation Types

- The sanctuary encompasses **three major forest types**:
 - **Dry Deciduous Forests**
 - **Moist Deciduous Forests**
 - **Semi-evergreen Forests**
- These varying forest types contribute to the area's rich floral and faunal diversity.

Flora – Major Tree Species

- The region is home to several important tree species, including:
 - **Silver Oak** (*Grevillea robusta*)
 - **Teak** (*Tectona grandis*)
 - **Indian Thorny Bamboo** (*Bambusa bambos*)

- **Calcutta Bamboo** (*Dendrocalamus strictus*)
- **Asan Tree** (*Terminalia tomentosa*)
- **Sweet Indrajao** (*Wrightia tinctoria*)
- **Amla** (*Phyllanthus emblica*)

Fauna – Mammals

- The sanctuary supports a healthy population of large and small mammals:
 - **Tiger, Leopard, and Wild Dog** – apex predators
 - **Gaur (Indian Bison) and Elephant** – large herbivores
 - **Sloth Bear, Jackal, Wild Pig**
 - **Sambar, Spotted Deer** – important prey species
 - **Common Langur, Bonnet Macaque** – arboreal primates

Fauna – Birds

- A rich avifauna population includes:
 - **Hornbills** – key seed dispersers and forest health indicators
 - **Kingfishers** – found near water bodies
 - **Bulbuls, Parakeets, Doves, Pigeons**
 - **Babblers, Flycatchers, Munias, Swallows**
 - **Woodpeckers** – indicators of old forest health
 - **Peafowl, Jungle Fowl, Partridges** – common ground birds