



Ecotourism Impacts on Conservation & Local Livelihoods.

A case study of Ranthambore
National Park, India.

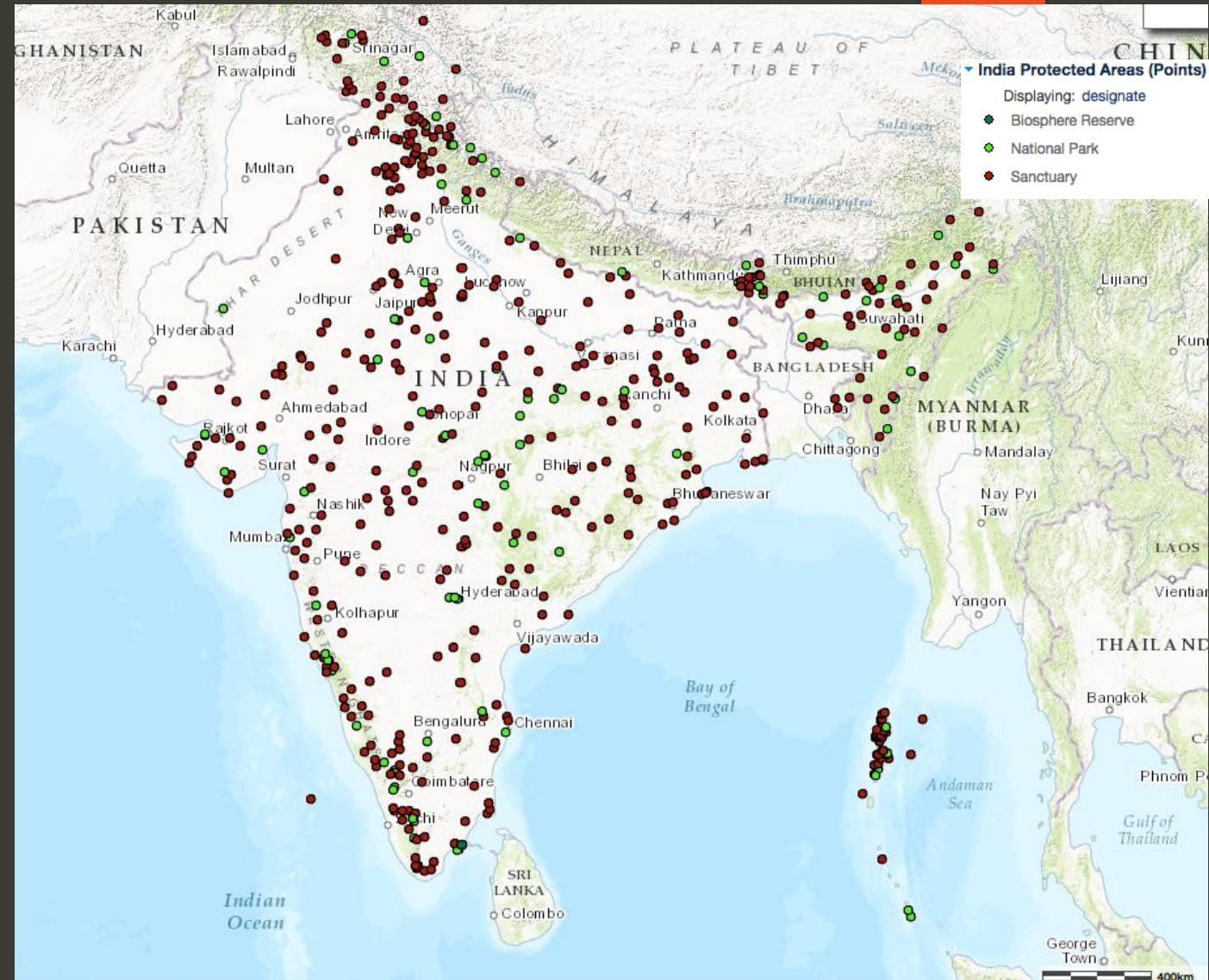


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INDIA'S PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

- One of the most biodiverse regions of the world.
- Vast network of PAs
- More than 500 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 70 National Parks
- Charismatic wildlife: added tourist attraction



Population of Royal Bengal Tigers (2016): 2226

Number of Tiger Reserves: 51



Indian court bans tourism in tiger reserve 'core zones'

🕒 24 July 2012 | India

BBC News, 2012

Tourism ban in core areas of tiger reserves

The Supreme Court has temporarily banned tourism in core zones or core areas in tiger reserves

Neha Sethi ✉

Live Mint News, 2012

Proposed Tourism Ban Renews Tiger Welfare Debate in India

VOA News, 2011

Will a ban on tourism help India's tigers?

The courts say tourists are no good for tigers, but tour operators and conservationists have mixed feelings

By Zoe Li 25 July, 2012

CNN Travel, 2012



"The tigers of India are being made to pay for the mindless tourism and their numbers are falling constantly... I am aware that tourists will not be able to see the best parts of Kanha or Bandhavgarh. But for the sort of pressure tourism was exerting on tigers, I think it is a small price to pay."

- Ajay Dubey
(Filer of PIL)

"Why should tourism be permitted in core areas? Whatever statistics may say, the fact remains that the tiger population in the country has diminished."

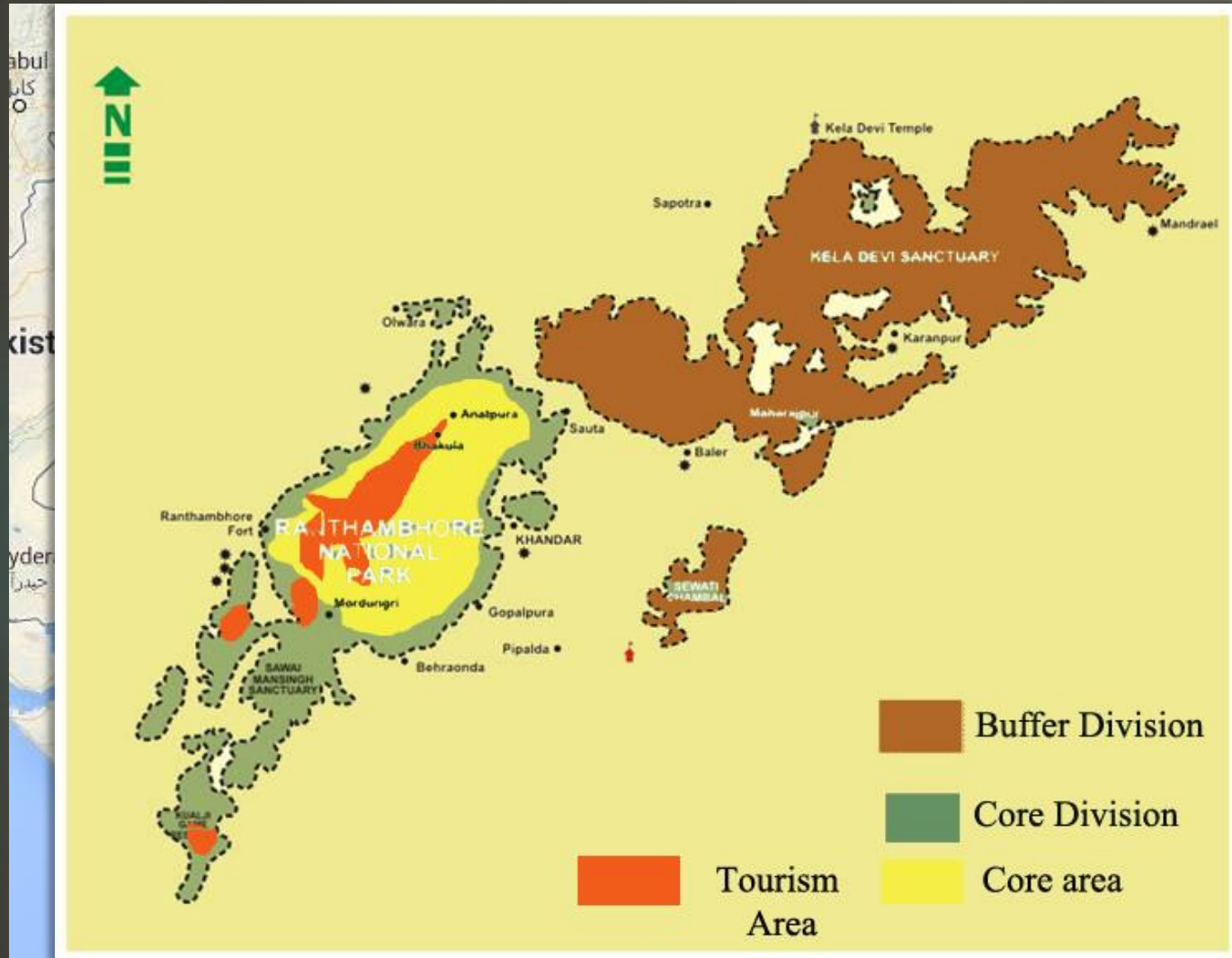
-Hon. Supreme Court of India



"To close the door on all tourism in tiger reserve core areas would be a disaster from many points of view, not the least of which for the tiger because I don't believe that without tourism the tigers can be protected and saved and secured for the future,"

-Belinda Wright

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK



- Ranthambore National Park (RNP) is one of the most popular National Parks in India.
- Is part of the greater **Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR)** which includes the neighboring Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary and Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary.
- A tourism ban would impact Ranthambore to a great extent.
- In 2011 there were a total of 42 tigers in RTR:
 - 33 present in RNP,
 - 8 in Sawai Mansingh WS and
 - 1 in Kailadevi WS

OBJECTIVE & METHODS



- ▶ Identify local perspectives regarding tourism and the tourism ban
- ▶ Used semi-structured interviews
 - ▶ How they were associated to the tourism industry
 - ▶ How tourism impacted their life
 - ▶ How they perceived the ban
- ▶ Snowball sampling method

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Majority of the stories were positive
- ▶ Time Constraint

RESULTS

- ▶ Documented 60 stories
- ▶ Categorized into stakeholder groups:
 - ▶ Locals from Sawai Madhopur
 - ▶ Forest Officials
 - ▶ Tourism Industry Personnel (Hotel owners, Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Safari organizers).
 - ▶ Non-Governmental Organizations



RESULTS



- ▶ Benefits
 - ▶ Direct
 - ▶ Due to direct employment in the tourism/hotel industry
 - ▶ Indirect
 - ▶ Due to indirect linkages with tourism industry or from programs
- ▶ Community and Conservation based programs: depended on co-operation among different stakeholder groups.











REFLECTIONS

On the community-industry relationship:

“I would say it (the business) is 80 per cent dependent on tourists. They visit the park. Then they visit our shop, get impressed by the range of our items and purchase them as souvenirs or simply as good authentic art-work”.

“Staff (hired) from other places... from ‘outside’, do not stay for long. It is hard and expensive to retain them and it is more feasible to have locals employed at every level of running a property.



On alternate livelihoods

“It is definitely better than farming, because this way I can spend time with my family and help them continue this art”



“It makes appropriate business sense. It (helps) secure (our) future and (creates) new employment opportunities for us locals”.

On the tourism ban:

“That will be bad. When the booking office was shifted out from the DFO’s (Divisional Forest Officer) office, I felt a severe pinch in business. Now when I have recovered from that, people want to stop tourists completely. God save this country and Ranthambhore and its forests!”

“It will shut off our business totally! We will have no option than becoming laborers. Please do something about it “.



On the tourism ban:



“No one really knows about Sawai Madhopur. People come here because of Ranthambore (the tiger reserve)”

“It will weaken (tiger) monitoring and make poachers’ lives easier,”

“If tourists go, the tiger will disappear too and with it will go our forests”.

Happy Ever After...?

- ▶ Ranthambore is far from being an example of ideal tourism management.
- ▶ There are a number of negative impacts of tourism in Ranthambore.

Many questions remain unanswered

- ▶ What do local communities perceive as 'tourism benefits'?
- ▶ What do local communities feel about tiger conservation?
- ▶ How does engagement/involvement in tourism impact conservation attitudes and behaviors
- ▶ Do these attitudes differ in parks with different tourism visitation?

THANK YOU!

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