

National parks in India

1 Before you read

What do you know about national parks in Germany, the UK or the USA? Make notes. Then talk about the sort of landscapes that have been turned into national parks. Does anyone live in the national park? Who works there?

2 Reading and discussing: Indian national parks



There are many national parks in all parts of India. They are important because they provide a safe place for the larger animals. But the big animals like tigers, leopards and elephants are not the only endangered species. Smaller animals, insects and plants die out, too, because human¹ activities have taken away the type of land that they live in. This means there is not enough food for the bigger animals.

Sometimes it is not enough just to make an area into a national park. One of the big difficulties in India is that because there are more and more people, there is less and less space for wild animals. People need space to live in and to grow food. Many of them live in or near a national park and it can be dangerous. Would you like to live next door to tigers?


It is also important that areas around a park don't contain heavy industry or any activity that might damage the environment. With some of the older parks this is already impossible because they are close to existing² industrial and living areas.


Balphakram National Park, one of only three reserves for elephants, is in the country, near the northeast border to Bangladesh at about 3,000 metres above sea level³. It is home to elephants, Bengal tigers, leopards, monkeys and many smaller endangered species. The people who live in the area need to have jobs and to earn money for their families. But in 2010 the Department⁴ of Atomic Energy stopped looking for uranium near the National Park, although this would have brought jobs to the area. The State Government is also trying to stop illegal coal mining in the country around the park.



¹human ['hju:mən] – menschlich, von Menschen • ²existing [ɪg'zɪstɪŋ] – which are already there • ³above sea level [ə,bʌv 'si: ,levl] – über Meereshöhe • ⁴department [dɪ'pɑ:tmənt] – hier: Behörde

a) Do you think national parks are important? Say why or why not.

 b) What are the pros and cons of having mines and factories near to or in national parks? What do you think the government should do? Do you and your partner agree?

 c) When you think about the number of very poor people in India, is it right that money is spent on national parks to help animals? What do you think? Discuss your ideas in class.

Lösungen

1

There are nearly 400 national parks, including the Grand Canyon National Park, all over the USA. People set up the parks to protect the landscape and the plants and animals that live there. Lots of people visit them to go hiking, camping and climbing. But many people, especially Native American tribes, live in the national parks, too. There are also lots of national parks in Britain, from the New Forest in the south to the Lake District in Northern England and the Cairngorm Mountains in Scotland. Over 300,000 people live and work in the British national parks. They are farmers and foresters and people who look after the tourists. In Germany there are 14 national parks from the Wattenmeer on the North Sea coast to Berchtesgaden in the mountains of the South. About 70 people live and work in the Berchtesgaden National Park.

2

- a) I think national parks are important because large animals like tigers and elephants can live in them safely. The parks are also a home to smaller animals and plants which the larger animals eat. Without national parks the animals will die out.
- b) pros:
- mines and factories bring jobs to the area
 - people with jobs don't need to hunt the animals in the park
- cons:
- mines and factories may damage the environment; the noise and other pollution is bad for the animals
 - illegal mines may be very dangerous places to work
- What the government should do: There should be no mines or factories in or near national parks. The government should spend money on organising visits to the park for tourists.
- c) Poor people in India need help, but the environment is important, too. India needs national parks with lots of different plants and with lots of large and small animals. The parks are very exciting for tourists and tourism can bring jobs and money to poor people who live in and near the parks.