

CHAPTER - 3

FOREST LAND, FOREST COVER AND VEGETATION

Total recorded forest land in the state is 11,879 sq.km, out of which 7,054 sq.km. is Reserved Forest, 3,772 sq.km. is Protected Forest and 1,053 sq.km. is Unclassed State Forest, constituting 13.38% of the geographical area of the state. The forest cover including the forests created outside the recorded forest area is 21.35% of the geographical area as per the latest report published by Forest Survey of India (ISFR, 2013, GOI).

Classification of Recorded Forest Land (Legal status)

Reserved Forest (RF) : An area notified under the provisions of India Forest Act (IFA), 1927 having full degree of protection. In Reserved Forests all activities are prohibited unless specifically permitted (Sec. 20 of IFA, 1927).

Protected Forest (PF) : An area notified under the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or other State Forest Acts, having limited degree of protection. In Protected Forest all activities are permitted unless prohibited (Sec. 29 of IFA, 1927).

Unclassed State Forest (USF) : An area recorded as forest but not included in reserved or protected forest category.

Table – 3.1: Legal status of forests in West Bengal (Area in Sq. Km.)

Year	Reserved Forests	Protected Forests	Unclassed State Forests	Private Protected Forests	Tea Garden Forests	Other Private Forests	Total Forests Area
1951	6,845	17	128	-	258	5,007	12,255
1961	6,979	3,451	483	598	257	204	11,972
1964	7,000	3,512	520	593	244	118	11,987
1971	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
1981	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
1991	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2001	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2002	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2003	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2004	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2006	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2007	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2008	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2009	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2010	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2011	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2012	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2013	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2014	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879
2015	7,054	3,772	1,053	-	-	-	11,879

(Source : West Bengal Forests, Centenary Commemoration Volume, Forest Directorate, 1964)

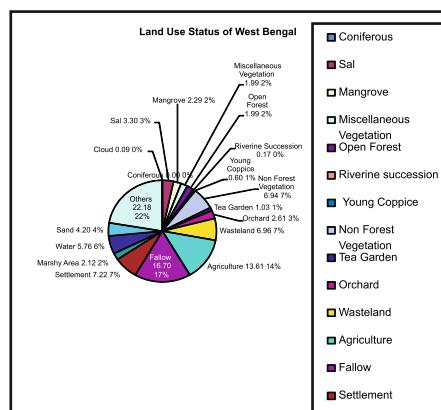
Table – 3.2: District-wise area under forests (legal status) in West Bengal

(Area in Sq.Km.)

Sl. No.	District	Reserved Forests	Protected Forests	Unclassed State Forests & others	Total Area
1	Darjeeling	1,115	-	89	1,204
* 2	Jalpaiguri	1,483	217	90	1,790
3	Cooch Behar	-	42	15	57
4	Bankura	80	1,311	91	1,482
5	Purba Medinipur	8	1,166	535	1,709
6	Paschim Medinipur				
7	Burdwan	3	192	82	277
8	Purulia	112	729	35	876
9	Birbhum	8	54	97	159
10	Hooghly	3	-	-	3
11	Nadia	5	3	5	13
12	Murshidabad	1	7	-	8
13	Malda	8	5	7	20
14	Uttar Dinajpur	8	4	6	18
15	Dakshin Dinajpur				
16	24-Parganas (N)	43	-	-	43
17	24-Parganas (S)	4,177	42	1	4,220
18	Howrah	-	-	-	-
19	Kolkata	-	-	-	-
Total State of West Bengal		7,054 (59.38%)	3,772 (31.75%)	1,053 (8.87%)	11,879 (100%)
Total India		425,494 (55.12%)	214,986 (27.85%)	131,341 (17.01%)	771,821 (100%)

* (Includes area of newly created Alipurduar District)

Land Use status in West Bengal



Major Forest Types of West Bengal

The concerned chapter on West Bengal from the **Atlas: Forest Types of India, 2011** by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Ministry of Environment Forests & Climate Change Government of India is given in the Annexure after Chapter 20 of this volume.

Table – 3.3: District-wise Geographical area and Recorded forest land in West Bengal

District	Geographical Area (Sq. km.)	Recorded Forest Area (Sq. km.)	% age of Recorded Forest Area
Darjeeling	3,149	1,204	38.23%
Jalpaiguri	6,227	1,790	28.75%
Cooch Behar	3,387	57	1.68%
Bankura	6,882	1,482	21.53%
Midnapore	14,081	1,709	12.14%
Burdwan	7,024	277	3.94%
Purulia	6,259	876	14.00%
Birbhum	4,545	159	3.50%
Hooghly	3,149	3	0.10%
Nadia	3,927	12	0.30%
Murshidabad	5,324	8	0.15%
Malda	3,733	20	0.54%
Uttar Dinajpur	3,140	10	0.32%
Dakshin Dinajpur	2,219	8	0.36%
Kolkata	104	-	0.00%
Howrah	1,467	-	0.00%
24-Parganas (South)	10,159	4,221	41.54%
24-Parganas (North)	3,977	43	1.08%
Total :	88,752	11,879	13.38%

Table-3.4: Comparative statement of forest cover as enumerated through GIS & Remote sensing
(*Source: State Forest Report. 2009 – 2010, West Bengal and Forest Survey of India 2015)

Survey Period	% Recorded Forest land	% Forest & Tree cover
1988	13.38	14.32
1991	13.38	14.97
1994	13.38	15.06
1997	13.38	15.16
2000	13.38	15.30
2004	13.38	15.52
2006	13.38	15.68
2007	13.38	16.67*
2008	13.38	16.67*
2009	13.38	16.67*
2011	13.38	17.27
2013	13.38	21.35
2015	13.38	21.31