

Seasonally dry tropical forests are home to a wide variety of unique wildlife that must struggle to survive under harsh conditions and adapt to months of little rainfall followed by a brief season of heavy rain. With more spaces between trees and lush green ground cover during the rainy season, larger mammals are more prominent in a dry tropical environment. Sloth Bear is one such species which is particularly confined to seasonally dry forests India. These forests are themselves one of the most endangered ecosystems due to frequent fire, overgrazing and exotic species invasion, biomass removal, extraction of minerals, quarrying, etc. Estimates indicate that approximately 40 percent of the seasonally dry tropical forests in India are degraded.

Sloth Bears are considered vulnerable animals as they are threatened by this habitat degradation and loss. Once they were captured for public entertainment, but due to a creation of general public awareness, demand for ‘dancing’ bears have now drastically reduced in India. However, they are occasionally hunted due to their aggressive behaviour and destruction of crops. Sometimes, they are also poached for use in Chinese medicines. Because of all these, Sloth Bears are placed in Red List Vulnerable Category and are provided legal protection by listing in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. They are also listed in CITES Appendix I. Although reliable population estimates are not available for the species, Sloth Bear