



Wildlife Conservation in India

Why in News

According to the recent data by the [Wildlife Crime Control Bureau \(WCCB\)](#) and **State Forest and Police Authorities**, in the past three years (2018-2020), about 2054 cases were registered for killing or illegal trafficking of wild animals in India.

- In order to control this, the WCCB has conducted a number of **species-specific enforcement operations** with coordination of State Enforcement Agencies.
- WCCB is a **statutory multi-disciplinary body** established by the Government of India under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, to combat organized wildlife crime in the country. It has its **headquarter in New Delhi**.

Key Points

▪ Impact of Illegal Wildlife Trade:

- **Species face extinction** because of demands arising out of illegal wildlife trade.
- **Overexploitation of the wildlife resources** due to its illegal trade creates imbalances in the ecosystem.
- Illegal wildlife trade as part of the illegal trade syndicates **undermines the economy of the country** and thereby creates social insecurity.
- Wild plants that provide **genetic variation for crops** (natural source for many medicines) are threatened by the illegal trade.

▪ Various Species-Specific Enforcement Operations:

- **Operation Save Kurma:** To focus on the poaching, transportation and illegal trade of live **turtles and tortoises**.
- **Operation Turtshield:** It was taken up to tackle the illegal trade of live **turtles**.
- **Operation Lesknow:** To gain attention of enforcement agencies towards the illegal wildlife trade **in lesser-known species of wildlife**.
- **Operation Clean Art:** To drag attention of enforcement agencies towards illegal wildlife trade **in Mongoose hair brushes**.
- **Operation Softgold:** To tackle **Shahtoosh Shawl** (made from Chiru wool) illegal trade and to spread awareness among the weavers and traders engaged in this trade.
- **Operation Birbil:** To curb illegal trade **in wild cat and wild bird species**.
- **Operation Wildnet:** It was aimed to draw the attention of the enforcement agencies within the country to focus their attention on the **ever increasing illegal wildlife trade over the internet** using social media platforms.
- **Operation Freelyfly:** To check illegal trade of **live birds**.
- **Operation Wetmark:** To ensure **prohibition of sale of meat of wild animals** in wet markets across the country.

▪ India's Domestic Legal Framework for Wildlife Conservation:

◦ Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife:

- The [42nd Amendment Act, 1976](#), Forests and Protection of Wild Animals and Birds

was transferred from State to **Concurrent List**.

- **Article 51 A (g)** of the Constitution states that it shall be the **fundamental duty** of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests and Wildlife.
- **Article 48 A** in the **Directive Principles of State policy**, mandates that the State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Legal Framework:**
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
 - **Environment Protection Act, 1986**
 - **The Biological Diversity Act, 2002**
- **India's Collaboration With Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts:**
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**
 - **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**
 - **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**
 - **World Heritage Convention**
 - **Ramsar Convention**
 - **The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)**
 - **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)**
 - **International Whaling Commission (IWC)**
 - **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**
 - **Global Tiger Forum (GTF)**

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