



Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022

For Prelims: Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022, UNEP, CITES.

For Mains: Importance of biodiversity and Wildlife, Significance of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Rajya Sabha** passed the **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022** which seeks to give effect to India's obligations under the [Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \('CITES'\)](#).

What is the Objective of Bill?

- **Protection of Endangered Species:** Bill seeks to **enhance punishment for [illegal Wildlife trade](#)**.
- **Better Management of Protected Areas:** It provides for certain permitted activities like [grazing or movement of livestock](#) and **Bonafide use of drinking and household water by local communities**.
- **Protection of Forest Lands:** It is so critical because it equally inculcates in itself the **protection of rights of the people** who have been residing there since ages.

What are the Proposed Amendments?

- This amendment proposed a **new schedule for species** listed in the **Appendices** under **CITES**.
- **Section 6** has been amended to constitute **Standing Committee** to exercise such powers and duties as may be delegated to it by the **State Board for Wildlife**.
- **Section 43** of the act amended which permitted the **use of elephants for 'religious or any other purposes'**.
- To enable the **Central government** to appoint a **Management Authority Section 49E** has been inserted.
- To allow the **Central Government** to appoint a **Scientific Authority** to provide guidance on matters relating to the **impact on the survival of the specimens on being traded**.
- The Bill also empowers **Central government** to regulate and stop the import, trade or possession of invasive plant or animal alien species.
- The Bill also **enhances the penalties** prescribed for violation of provisions of the Act.
 - For 'General violations', maximum fine is increased from **25,000 to 1 lakh**.
 - In case of **Specially protected animals**, the minimum fine of **Rs. 10,000** has been enhanced to **Rs. 25,000**.

What are the Concerns Associated with the Bill?

- Phrase "**any other purpose**" is vague and has potential of encouraging commercial trade of elephants.

- Some important issues regarding **Human-Wildlife conflict, Eco-sensitive zone rule**, etc., has not been addressed.
- According to the report provided by the **Parliamentary Standing Committee**, species listed in all three schedules of the Bill are incomplete.
- The **scientists, botanists, biologists** are short in number and needed **greater inclusion** of them to accelerate the process of listing all existing species of **wildlife**.

What is the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972?

- The [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#) provides a **legal framework** for the **protection of various species of wild animals and plants, management of their habitats, regulation and control of trade in wild animals, plants and products** made from them.
- The **act** also lists **schedules of plants and animals** that are afforded various degrees of protection and monitoring by the government.

What is the CITES?

- The **CITES** is an **international agreement** to which States and regional economic integration organizations adhere voluntarily.
- **CITES** was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in **1963** at a meeting of members of the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#).
- **CITES** entered into force in **July 1975**.
- The **CITES Secretariat** is administered by [UNEP \(The United Nations Environment Programme\)](#) and is located at **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **India is a signatory** to the CITES.

What are the Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife Conservation?

- The [42nd Amendment Act, 1976](#), Forests and Protection of Wild Animals and Birds was transferred from **State to Concurrent List**.
- **Article 51A(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**.

Way Forward

- Strict **enforcement of law** is necessary for the conservation of the wildlife.
- **Businesses and corporations** involved in **real estate** must adhere to the **law** rigorously to balance out their **financial and muscle strength**.
 - **Nicobar jungles** are being completely ruined and removed for the benefit of some **corporations**.
 - So essentially, the wildlife is actually attacked not by humans but by the **corporations**.
- Only having **regulations** and **technological understanding** are not sufficient, local communities must also **realize** the value of their **engagement**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. If a particular plant species is placed under Schedule VI of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, what is the implication? (2020)

- (a) A licence is required to cultivate that plant.
 (b) Such a plant cannot be cultivated under any circumstances.
 (c) It is a Genetically Modified crop plant.
 (d) Such a plant is invasive and harmful to the ecosystem.

Ans: (a)

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