



Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill 2021

For Prelims: Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, CITES

For Mains: Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021

Why in News?

Recently, [Lok Sabha](#) passed by voice vote the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021** that seeks to provide for **implementation of the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)**.

What is the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill 2021?

▪ About:

- It was introduced in Lok Sabha by the **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** on 17th December 2021.
- It seeks to amend the **[Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#)**.
- The Bill seeks to **increase the species** protected under the law and implement the CITES.

▪ Features:

◦ CITES:

- CITES is an **international agreement** between governments to ensure that **international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants** does not threaten the survival of the species.
- The Convention requires countries to **regulate the trade of all listed specimens through permits**. It also seeks to regulate the possession of live animal specimens.
 - **The Bill seeks to implement these provisions of CITES.**

◦ Authority:

- **The Bill provides for the central government to designate a:**
 - **Management Authority**, which grants **export or import permits** for trade of specimens.
 - Every person engaging in trade of a **scheduled specimen** must report the details of the transaction to the **Management Authority**.
 - The Bill **prohibits** any person from modifying or removing the identification mark of the specimen.
 - **Scientific Authority**, which gives advice on aspects related to **impact on the survival of the specimens being traded**.

◦ Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:

- Currently, the Act has **six schedules** for specially protected plants (one), specially protected animals (four), and vermin species (one).
 - **The Bill reduces the total number of schedules to four by:**
 - **Schedule I** for species that will enjoy the **highest level** of protection.

- **Schedule II** for species that will be subject to a **lesser degree** of protection.
 - **Schedule III** that covers plants.
 - It removes the schedule for **vermin species**.
 - Vermin refers to **small animals that carry diseases** and destroy food.
 - It **inserts a new schedule** for specimens listed in the Appendices under CITES (scheduled specimens).
- **Invasive Alien Species:**
 - It **empowers the central government** to regulate or prohibit the import, trade, possession or proliferation of **invasive alien species**.
 - Invasive alien species refers to plant or animal species **which are not native to India** and whose introduction may adversely impact wildlife or its habitat.
 - The central government may authorize an officer to **seize and dispose of the invasive species**.
 - **Control of Sanctuaries:**
 - The Act entrusts the **Chief Wildlife Warden** to control, manage and maintain all sanctuaries in a state.
 - The Chief Wildlife Warden is appointed by the **state government**.
 - **The Bill specifies that actions of the Chief Warden must be in accordance with the management plans for the sanctuary.**
 - These plans will be prepared as per **guidelines of the central government**, and as **approved by the Chief Warden**.
 - For sanctuaries falling under **special areas**, the management plan must be prepared after due consultation with the **Gram Sabha** concerned.
 - Special areas include a Scheduled Area or areas where the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers** (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 is applicable.
 - Scheduled Areas are economically backward areas with a predominantly tribal population, notified under the **Fifth Schedule to the Constitution**.
 - **Conservation Reserve:**
 - State governments may declare areas adjacent to **national parks and sanctuaries** as a **conservation reserve**, for protecting flora and fauna, and their habitat.
 - **The Bill empowers the central government to also notify a conservation reserve.**
 - **Penalties:**
 - The **WPA Act 1972** prescribes imprisonment terms and fines for violating the provisions of the Act.
 - **The Bill increases these fines.**

Type of Violation	1972 Act	2021 Bill
General violation	Up to Rs 25,000	Up to Rs 1,00,000
Specially protected animals	At least Rs 10,000	At least Rs 25,000

What is the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972?

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** provides a legal framework for the **protection** of various species of wild animals and plants, the **management** of their habitats, and the **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.
- The Act has been **amended several times**, with the last amendment having been made in 2006.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. If a particular plant species is placed under Schedule VI of the Wildlife 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)

Explanation:

- The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 is enacted for protection of plants and animal species. The Act provides for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants. It has six schedules which give varying degrees of protection.
 - Schedule I and part II of Schedule II provide absolute protection - offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.
 - Species listed in Schedule III and Schedule IV are also protected, but the penalties are much lower.
 - Schedule V includes the animals which may be hunted.
 - The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are prohibited from cultivation and planting.
- Plants in Schedule VI
 - Beddome's cycad (*Cycas beddomei*),
 - Blue Vanda (*Vanda soerulec*),
 - Kuth (*Saussurea lappa*),
 - Ladies slipper orchids (*Paphiopedilum* spp.),
 - Pitcher plant (*Nepenthes khasiana*),
 - Red Vanda (*Ranantthera imschootiana*)
- However, the further also states that cultivation of specified plants without licence is prohibited. As per Section 17C of the Act, no person shall cultivate a specified plant except under and in accordance with a licence granted by the Chief Wild Life Warden or any other officer authorised by the State Government in this behalf.
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

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