



Illegal Mining in Orchha Wildlife Sanctuary

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) formed a committee to look into the complaint of the **illegal operation** of stone crushers and mining quarries in an [eco-sensitive zone](#) of **Orchha Wildlife Sanctuary**.

- According to the NGT, **immediate action is required** for the **disposal of 337 tonnes of chemical waste**, addressing [groundwater contamination](#), shortage of piped water, and monitoring **iron, manganese and nitrate concentrations** exceeding the permissible limit.

What are the Key Points About the Orchha Wildlife Sanctuary?

- **About:**
 - It was established in **1994** and is located within a large forest area.
 - It is **situated near the [Betwa River](#)** (a tributary of the Yamuna), in the **border region between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh**, contributing to its unique ecosystem and biodiversity.
- **Fauna Species:**
 - It is home to a **diverse range of fauna**, including [spotted deer](#), **Blue Bull**, [Peacock](#), **Wild pig, Monkey, Jackal, Nilgai, Sloth Bear**, and various bird species.
 - **Birdwatching** is particularly popular, with around 200 bird species found in the sanctuary's river ecosystem. These include both resident birds and migratory species such as peafowls, peacocks, swans, Jungle Bush Quail, minivet, etc.
- **Forest Types:**
 - It has **southern tropical [dry deciduous forests](#)**. The sanctuary **features dense plantations of Dhawa Trees, Kardhai Trees, Teak, Palaash, and Khair**, contributing to its rich biodiversity and natural ambiance.

What are Eco-Sensitive Zones?

- **About:**
 - The [National Wildlife Action Plan \(2002-2016\)](#) of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** stipulated that state governments should declare land falling **within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries** as eco-fragile zones or [Eco-Sensitive Zones \(ESZs\)](#) under the [Environmental \(Protection\) Act, 1986](#).
- **Activities around ESZs:**
 - **Prohibited Activities:** Commercial mining, establishment of major [Hydroelectric Projects \(HEP\)](#), commercial use of wood.
 - **Regulated Activities:** Establishment of hotels and resorts, commercial use of natural water, drastic change of agriculture system, such as: adoption of heavy technology, pesticides, etc, widening of roads.
 - **Permitted Activities:** [Rainwater harvesting](#), [organic farming](#), use of renewable energy sources.

▪ **Significance of ESZs:**

◦ **Protect Core Ecological Areas:**

- **Acts as [buffer zone](#)** reducing impact from activities like construction and pollution.
- **Minimises threats to wildlife** and ecosystems.
- **Promotes in-situ conservation** within natural habitats.

◦ **Ensure Sustainable Development:**

- **Reduces [human-wildlife conflict](#)** by minimising disturbances.
- Encourages **sustainable practices** in surrounding communities.
- Creates a transition zone between high-protection and lower-restriction areas.

Read More: [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. In which one among the following categories of protected areas in India are local people not allowed to collect and use the biomass? (2012)

- (a)** Biosphere Reserves
- (b)** National Parks
- (c)** Wetlands declared under Ramsar Convention
- (d)** Wildlife Sanctuaries

Ans: (b)

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