



Sukhna Lake Declared Eco-Sensitive Zone

Why in News?

Recently, **The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, declared an area from 1 km to 2.035 km around the **Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary** as an **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** in **Panchkula district, Haryana** for the purpose of **preventing, controlling and abating environment pollution**.

Key Points

- The **total area of the ESZ** covers a total of **24.60 sq km**.
- **Prohibited and Regulated Activities in ESZ:**
 - Activities are regulated under **the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
 - **Prohibited Activities:**
 - Commercial **mining, stone quarrying**, crushing units, and new sawmills.
 - Establishing industries causing **pollution** (water, air, soil, noise).
 - Use or **production of hazardous substances** and commercial use of **firewood**.
 - **Discharge of untreated effluents** into natural water bodies or land areas.
- **About Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary:**
 - The Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, spread over **25.98 square km** (about 6420 acres), is **under the administrative control of the Union territory of Chandigarh** and shares its **boundaries with Haryana and Punjab**.
 - The sanctuary is located in the **Shivalik foothills**, which are considered ecologically sensitive and geologically unstable.
 - It is home to at least **seven Schedule 1 animal species of the Wildlife Act, 1972**, including **leopard, Indian pangolin, sambar, golden jackal, king cobra, python, and monitor lizard**.
 - The **Schedule 1** species are considered endangered and in need of immediate protection.
 - Besides, there are **Schedule 2** animal species like reptiles, butterflies, trees, shrubs, climbers, herbs, and 250 bird species that inhabit the sanctuary.
 - **In 2020**, the Punjab and Haryana High Court **declared Sukhna Lake a "living entity"** and directed the Environment Ministry to establish at least a 1 km ESZ from the sanctuary's boundary in Punjab and Haryana.



Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

- 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](#).
- While the **10-km rule is implemented as a general principle**, the extent of its application can vary. **Areas beyond 10 km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs**, if they hold larger ecologically important “**sensitive corridors**”.

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