



Wild Life Licensing Rules 2024

For Prelims: Wild Life (Protection) Licensing (Additional Matters for Consideration) Rules, 2024, [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#), [CITES](#)

For Mains: Wildlife Conservation, success and challenges involved in Wildlife Protection Act 1972, Wild Life Licensing Rules

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

The central government recently introduced **Wild Life (Protection) Licensing (Additional Matters for Consideration) Rules, 2024**, amending the **wildlife trade rules, 1983** resulting in significant changes in the **licensing process and exclusions of certain species**.

- The amendments became operational on 16th January, 2024, marking the first revision since 1983.

What are Wild Life Licensing Rules 2024?

- **Schedule I:**
 - The rules published in 1983 state that **no such licence shall be granted to trade in a wild animal** specified in **Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II to the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#)**, except with the previous consultation of the central government.
 - This condition has been changed in the new guidelines, which say **no such licence shall be granted** if it relates to any wild animal **specified in Schedule I to the Act**, except with the previous consultation of the Central Government.
 - This means that the restrictions on Schedule I species, which include animals requiring utmost protection, such as [tigers](#), [elephants](#), [rhinos](#), etc., are still in place, with a provision for consultation.
- **Schedule II:**
 - The significant change in the new guidelines is the **removal of licensing restrictions** for species listed in **Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
 - This implies that the licences for trading in **Schedule II species can be granted** without any consultation or approval from the central government, which was required earlier.
- **Factors Considered in Licensing:**
 - The new rules also specify the factors that the authorised officers must consider while granting licences, such as the **capacity of the applicant, the source and manner of obtaining supplies**, the number of **existing licences in the area**, and the **implications on hunting or trade** of the concerned wild animals.

What are the Concerns Regarding the New Rules?

- **Exclusion of Schedule II Species:**
 - The notification does not provide clarity on why **licensing restrictions for Schedule II**

species have been removed.

- Schedule II encompasses important species, such as **endangered mammals, birds, turtles, geckos, and snakes**, and their exclusion from licensing restrictions raises concerns about the level of protection they will receive.
- The lack of clarity necessitates further scrutiny to ensure that the revised **rules adequately address conservation needs** and do not inadvertently compromise the protection of vulnerable wildlife.
- **Rationalization of Schedules in 2022:**
 - The schedules of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 were rationalized in The [Wild Life \(Protection\) Amendment Act, 2022](#), leading to changes in the categorization of species.
 - Before the 2022 amendment, **schedules were based on the level of endangerment of species**. The recent rationalization may have altered the criteria for categorizing species.
 - Experts question whether the exclusion of **certain species in Schedule II aligns with the rationalization process** and whether those species have indeed increased in numbers, justifying a lower level of protection.

Status of Wildlife Trade

- India is a bio-diverse country, with nearly **6.5% of the world's known wildlife species**. Approximately, **7.6% of the world's mammals and 12.6% of the world's birds are found in India**.
 - The illicit demand, globally, for wildlife and its products has seen the rise of wildlife crime across the subcontinent.
- In India, wildlife trade includes diverse products including **mongoose hair**; snake skins; **Rhino horn**; **Tiger and Leopard claws**, bones, skins, whiskers; **Elephant tusks**; deer antlers; turtle shells; medicinal plants; timber and caged birds such as parakeets, mynas, munias etc.
 - A large part of this **trade is meant for the international market** and has no direct demand in India.
- India is one of the top 20 countries for **wildlife trafficking** and one of the **top 10 for wildlife trafficking by air**.
- The **World Wildlife Report 2020** by [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) found that between 1999 and 2018, **6,000 different species of flora and fauna were seized globally**.

What is the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972?

- **About:**
 - The Wild Life (Protection) Act, of 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 varying degrees of protection and monitoring by the government.
 - After the enactment of [Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019](#) Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 became applicable to the **Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**.
- **Latest Amendment:**
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022:**
 - The **number of schedules has been reduced to four from earlier six**.
 - **Schedule I** contains animal species enjoying the highest level of protection.
 - **Schedule II** for animal species subject to a lesser degree of protection.
 - **Schedule III** for **protected plant species**, and
 - **Schedule IV** for scheduled specimens under [CITES \(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora\)](#).

Way Forward

- Establishing a **robust and transparent mechanism** for the consultation and approval **process for Schedule I species**, and ensuring the participation and representation of the relevant stakeholders.
- Providing a **clear and rational explanation** for the exclusion of Schedule II species from the consultation and approval process, and the criteria for selecting the species.
- Strengthening the **enforcement and compliance of the wildlife trade laws** and regulations, and enhancing the penalties and incentives for the violators and the abiders.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

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)

Mains

Q. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in the conservation of flora and fauna? (2018)

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