



## Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021

**For Prelims:** Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, CITES, UNEP, IUCN

**For Mains:** Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change** submitted its report on the proposed the **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021**.

- The standing committee has found that **some species were excluded from various schedules of wildlife and plants** that have been proposed by the **Environment Ministry** and has recommended a revised listing of schedules to include these species.

### What is Wild Life (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**.

### What are Key features of the Bill?

- **Implementing Provision of CITES:** The Bill seeks to **implement provisions of [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)**. 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.
    - As per CITES, the Management Authority may use an identification mark for a specimen.
    - The Bill prohibits any person from modifying or removing the identification mark of the specimen.
    - Additionally, every person possessing live specimens of scheduled animals must obtain a registration certificate from the Management Authority.
  - **Scientific Authority**, which gives advice on aspects related to impact on the survival of the specimens being traded.
- **Rationalizing Schedules:** 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 and
- **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:** The Bills 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 wild life or its habitat**.
  - The central government may authorize an officer to seize and dispose the invasive species.
- **Control of Sanctuaries:** The Act entrusts the **Chief Wild Life Warden** to control, manage and maintain all sanctuaries in a state.
  - The Chief Wild Life Warden is **appointed by the state government**.
  - The Bill specifies that the actions of the **Chief Warden must be in accordance with the management plans for the sanctuary**.
  - 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 Reserves:** Under the Act, 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**.
- **Surrender of Captive Animals:** The Bill provides for any person to voluntarily surrender any captive animals or animal products to the **Chief Wild Life Warden**.
  - No compensation will be paid to the person for surrendering such items.
  - The surrendered items become property of the state government.
- **Penalties:** The Act 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

**Source: IE**

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