



Red Sand Boa

For Prelims: [Red Sand Boa](#), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)-India

For Mains: Significance of addressing illegal wildlife trade

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a report by the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)-India** titled '**Illegal Trade of [Red Sand Boa](#) in India 2016-2021**' has exposed the trade of red sand boa.

- This alarming revelation underscores the pressing concern about the illegal trade of Red Sand Boas and the urgency for conservation efforts.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The report documents a total of **172 incidents of seizures involving red sand boas between 2016 and 2021**, revealing the alarming extent of illegal trade.
- Illegal trade spans **18 Indian states, 1 Union Territory, and 87 districts; Maharashtra and UP record the highest incidents.**
 - **Maharashtra dominates with 59 cases**, including urban areas like Pune, Thane, Mumbai Suburban.
 - Uttar Pradesh closely follows 33 incidents, often near Nepal's border in districts like Bahraich, and Lakhimpur-Kheri.
- Social media, especially **YouTube, aids illegal trade, with 200 sales-promoting videos in 2021.**
- The report's findings underscore the urgent need for **conservation efforts to prevent the further decline of the red sand boa** population and protect India's biodiversity.

What are the Key Facts About Red Sand Boa?

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▪ **About:**

- **The Red Sand Boa (*Eryx johnii*)**, commonly called the **Indian Sand Boa**, is a **non-venomous species**.
- It is a primarily **reddish-brown and thick-set snake that grows to an average length of 75 cm**.
- Unlike most snakes, the tail is almost as thick as the body and gives the reptile the appearance of being "**double-headed**".
- **The Red Sand Boa is the largest of the sand boa in the world. Nocturnal and spends the majority of its time under the ground.**

▪ **Distribution:**

- Found in the whole of India **excluding North-east states and North-Bengal**; also not found in **Indian islands**.

▪ **Status:**

- [IUCN Red List](#): **Near Threatened**
- [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#): **Appendix II**.
- [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act of 1972](#): **Schedule IV**.

▪ **Threats to Red Sand Boa:**

- Expansion of human settlements and activities.
- Demand upsurge in pet trade, as well as for use in **black magic**.
- Poached for perceived medicinal benefits.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)-India:

- **WCS-India** is a Section 25 (association having objects to promote commerce, art, science, religion, charity or any other useful purpose and not having any profit motive) **non-profit organization** in India, demonstrates a strong commitment to conservation.
- It operates in full compliance with Indian regulations, emphasizing its dedication to preserving the country's natural environment and its rich biodiversity.

Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. King Cobra is the only snake that makes its own nest. Why does it make its nest? (2010)

(a) It is a snake-eater and the nest helps attract other snakes

(b) It is a viviparous snake and needs a nest to give birth to its offspring

(c) It is an oviparous snake and lays its eggs in the nest and guards the nest until they are hatched

(d) It is large, cold blooded animal and needs a nest to hibernate in the cold season

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- King cobras are venomous snakes that are found in South and Southeast Asia. They can grow up to 18 feet long which makes it the longest venomous snake in the world. They are threatened by habitat destruction and have been listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List since 2010.
- Being an oviparous (who lays eggs) reptile, it makes nests to lay eggs and guard them.
Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

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