



National Wildlife Health Policy

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Indian government proposed a **National Wildlife Health Policy** aimed at addressing health threats faced by wildlife.

What is the Proposed National Wildlife Health Policy?

▪ About:

- The [Central Zoo Authority](#), under the [Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change \(MoEF&CC\)](#), organized a consultative workshop involving government departments, [NGOs](#), academic institutions, [zoological parks](#), and veterinary universities.
 - The policy development is being supported by institutions such as the GISE Hub at **IIT Bombay** and the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser** to the Government of India.

▪ Aim:

- The policy will complement India's [National Wildlife Action Plan \(2017-31\)](#) and the [One Health policy](#), which aims to optimize the **health of people, animals, and the environment** by recognizing their interdependence.
- The **National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-31)** outlines **103 conservation actions** and **250 projects**.
 - These include creating a **standard protocol for disease surveillance** in tiger reserves, protected areas, and forests, as well as **establishing a legally binding protocol** for mercy killing and euthanasia of wild animals.
- The policy will also cover areas such as **managing wildlife pathogen risk, disease outbreak preparedness and response, and biosecurity**.
- **The policy aimed to promote R&D initiatives** focused on wildlife diseases and health management strategies.
 - Enhance the **skills and knowledge of stakeholders** involved in wildlife conservation and management.

▪ Current Wildlife Health Challenges:

- Indian wildlife is facing **various health issues**, including **infectious diseases (Canine Distemper Virus)**, habitat loss, climate change impacts, and illegal activities.
 - The policy is required as **India is home to over 91,000 species of wildlife**, with **more than 1,000 protected areas**, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and biosphere reserves.

Central Zoo Authority

- The [Central Zoo Authority \(CZA\)](#) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, established in 1992 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is chaired by the Environment Minister and has 10 members and a member-secretary.
- Its objective is to complement and strengthen the national effort in conservation of rich biodiversity.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife

- **42nd Amendment Act, 1976:** Forests & Protection of Wild Animals and Birds (moved from State to Concurrent List)
- **Article 48 A:** State shall endeavor to protect & improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife of country
- **Article 51 A (g):** Fundamental duty to protect & improve natural environment including forests and Wildlife

Legal Frameworks

- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Major Conservation Initiatives

- **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):**
 - ⌚ Financial assistance provided to State/UT Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife
 - ⌚ A Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)**
- **Guidelines for Eco-tourism in Protected Areas**
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation**
- **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau:** To combat wildlife-related crimes
- **Wildlife Division (MoEFCC):**
 - ⌚ Policy and law for conservation of biodiversity and Protected Area network
 - ⌚ Technical and financial support to the State/ UTs under IDHW, Central Zoo Authority and Wildlife Institute of India

■ **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):** Collection, collation of intelligence & its dissemination, establishment of centralized Wild Life crime databank, coordination etc.

Wildlife Crime Control:

- ⌚ Operation Save Kurma
- ⌚ Operation Thunderbird

Species-Specific Initiatives

- Protection and conservation of Greater Adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract
- Dolphin Conservation in Non-Protected Area Segment of Ganga River
- Conservation Breeding Centre for Wild water buffalo (2020)
- Recovery programme for Snow leopard (2009)
- Recovery programme for Vultures (2006)
- Project Elephant (1992)
- Project Tiger/National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (1973)

India's Collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts

- ⌚ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- ⌚ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- ⌚ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ⌚ World Heritage Convention
- ⌚ Ramsar Convention
- ⌚ The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)
- ⌚ United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- ⌚ International Whaling Commission (IWC)
- ⌚ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- ⌚ Global Tiger Forum (GTF)



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UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

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)

Q. Which of the following can be threats to the biodiversity of a geographical area? (2012)

1. Global warming
2. Fragmentation of habitat
3. Invasion of alien species
4. Promotion of vegetarianism

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (a)