



# drishti

## 'Not All Animals Migrate by Choice' Campaign

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Ahead of the International Day of Biological Diversity celebrated on May 22, **UN Environment India and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of India** has launched an awareness campaign '**Not all animals migrate by choice**' to be displayed at major airports across the country.

- The campaign aims at creating awareness and garnering public support for the protection and conservation of wildlife, prevention of smuggling and reduction in demand for wildlife products.
- **The campaign also complements worldwide action on illegal trade in wildlife through UN Environment's global campaign, Wild for Life.**

### Impact of illegal wildlife trade

- **Species face extinction** because of demands arising out of illegal wildlife trade.
- Overexploitation of the wildlife resources due to its illegal trade creates **imbalances in the ecosystem.**
- Illegal wildlife trade as part of the illegal trade syndicates **undermines the economy** of the country and thereby creating social insecurity.
- Wild plants that provide genetic variation for crops (natural source for many medicines) are threatened by the illegal trade.
- In the first phase of the campaign, **Tiger, Pangolin, Star Tortoise and Tokay Gecko have been chosen** as they are highly endangered due to illegal trading in international markets.
  - Recent media reports on seizures of illegally traded species and their parts at airports is a growing indication of rampant wildlife trafficking.
  - Some of the major wildlife species being smuggled through airports are star tortoises, live birds, Shahtoosh shawls, tiger and leopard body parts, ivory, rhino horns, pangolin and pangolin scales, sea shells, sea-horse, Sea-cucumber, red sanders, agarwood, deer antlers, mongoose hairs, reptile skins, live snakes, lizards, corals, orchids and medicinal plants.

- **Phase two** will include more threatened species and will also consider other routes of trafficking.
- Illegal Trade in Wildlife will continue as long as there is a demand-market for it. Awareness supported by co-ordinated action of all enforcement agencies, people's participation and proper implementation of national and international wildlife law can help the fight against wildlife crime.

## UN Environment

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- **The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) is a leading global environmental authority** that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.
- **It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.**

## Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)

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- It is a **statutory multi-disciplinary body**, established by the Government of India **under the Ministry of Environment and Forests**, to combat organized wildlife crime in the country.
- The Bureau has its **headquarters in New Delhi.**
- **Under Section 38 (Z) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, it is mandated to:**
  - collect and collate intelligence related to organized wildlife crime activities and to disseminate the same to the State and other enforcement agencies for immediate action so as to apprehend the criminals.
  - establish a centralized wildlife crime data bank.
  - assist foreign authorities and international organization concerned to facilitate coordination and universal action for wildlife crime control.
  - build capacity of the wildlife crime enforcement agencies for scientific and professional investigation into wildlife crimes.
  - assist State Governments to ensure success in prosecutions related to wildlife crimes.
  - advise the Government of India on issues relating to wildlife crimes having national and international ramifications, relevant policy and laws.
- It also **assists and advises the customs authorities in inspection of the consignments of flora & fauna** as per the provisions of the Wild Life Protection Act, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Export Import (EXIM) Policy governing such an item.