



drishti

Rhesus Macaque Declared Vermin

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/rhesus-macaque-declared-vermin

The Union Environment Ministry has declared **Monkeys (Rhesus Macaque)** as 'vermin' in Himachal Pradesh.

- It will allow local authorities to cull this animal in certain identified non-forest areas in Shimla for one year.
- The state government reported harm to life and property including large-scale destruction of agriculture due to the overpopulation of this species outside forests.
- Rhesus Macaque monkeys are protected species under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the law allows for it to be hunted by declaring it 'vermin' for a specific period if it poses a danger to human life or property.

Rhesus Macaques

- These are familiar brown primates with red faces and rears. They have close-cropped hair on their heads, which accentuates their very expressive faces.
- Their natural range includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Southeast Asia, and China. A few troops of introduced rhesus macaques now live wild in Florida.
- It has a least concerned status in the **IUCN** red list.
- These intelligent animals can adapt to many habitats, and some can even become accustomed to living in human communities. This is most common in India, where Hindus regard the animals as sacred and usually leave them undisturbed.

Vermin Animal

- As per **Section 62 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, States can send a list of wild animals to the Centre requesting it to declare them vermin for selective slaughter.
- Wildlife laws divide species into 'schedules' ranked from I to V. Schedule I members are the best protected, in theory, with severe punishments meted out to those who hunt them.
- Wild boars, nilgai and rhesus monkeys are Schedule II and III members, it is also protected, but can be hunted under specific conditions.