

Wild life Protection Act

The Indian Parliament enacted the wildlife (Protection) Act in 1972 which provides for the safeguard and protection of the wildlife (Flora and Fauna) in the country. This is an important legislation and forms an integral part of the environment and ecology.

Wildlife Protection Act 1972 - This act provides for the protection of the country's wild animals, birds and plants in order to ensure environmental and ecological security among other things, the act lays down restrictions on hunting many animal species. The Act was last amended in the year 2006. An Amendment bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2013 and referred to a Standing Committee, but it was withdrawn in 2015.

Constitutional Provisions for the wildlife Act
Article 48 A of the constitution of India directs the state to protect and improve the environment and the safeguard wildlife and forests.

This article was added to the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976.

Article 51 A imposes certain fundamental duties for the people of India. One of them is to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures.

History of Wildlife Protection Legislation in India
1. The first such law was passed by

2

British Indian Govt in 1887 called the wild birds protection act 1887. The law made possession and sale of wild birds which were either killed or captured ~~illegal~~ illegally.

- 2) A second law was enacted in 1912 called the wild birds and Animals protection act. This was amended in 1935 when the wild birds and Animals Protection (Amendment) Act 1935 was passed.
- 3) During the British Raj, wildlife protection was not accorded a priority, it was only in 1960 that the issue of protection of wildlife and the prevention of certain species from becoming extinct came into the fore.

Need For the wildlife Protection Act - Wildlife is a part of forests, and that was a State subject until the parliament passed this law in 1972. Reasons for a nationwide law in the domain of environment. Particularly wildlife include the following.

- 1) India is a treasure trove of varied flora and fauna. Many species were seeing a rapid decline in numbers. For instance at the turn of the 20th century, India was home to close to 4000 tigers, by the seventies this number drastically reduced to 1820.
- 2) A drastic decrease in the flora and fauna can cause ecological imbalance which affects many aspects of climate and the ecosystem.
- 3) The most recent Act passed during the British era in this regard was the wild birds and Animals protection 1935.

This needed to be upgraded as the punishment awarded to poachers and traders of wild life products were disproportionate to the huge financial benefits that accrue to them.

- 4) There were only few national parks in India prior to the enactment of this Act.

Salient features of Wildlife Protection Act.

This Act provides for the protection of listed species of animals, birds and plants and also for the establishment of a network of ecologically important protected areas in the country.

- 1) The Act provides for the formation of wildlife advisory boards, wildlife wardens, specifies their powers and duties etc.
- 2) It helped India become a party of the convention on International Trade in Endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES)
- 1) CITES is a multilateral treaty with the objective of protecting endangered animals and plants.
- 2) It is also known as Washington Convention and was adopted as a result of a meeting of IUCN members.
- 3) For the first time, a comprehensive list of the endangered species of country was prepared.
- 4) The Act prohibited the hunting of endangered species.
- 3) Scheduled animals are prohibited from being traded as per the Act's provision.

The Act provides for licences for the sale, transfer and possession of some wildlife species.

- 6) It provides for the establishment of wildlife Sanctuaries, National Parks etc.
- 7) Its provisions paved the way for the formation of the central Zoo Authority. This is the central body responsible for the oversight of Zoos in India. It was established in ~~1992~~ 1992.

- 8) The Act created six schedules which gave varying degrees of protection to classes of flora and fauna.

Schedule I and Schedule II (Part II) get absolute protection and offences under these Schedules attract maximum penalties.

The Schedules also include species which may be hunted.

- 9) The National Board for wildlife was constituted as a statutory organisation under the provisions of this Act.

This is an advisory board that offers advice to the central govt on issues of wildlife conservation in India.

- 10) It is also the apex body to review and approve all matters related to wildlife projects of national Parks, Sanctuaries etc.
- 11) The Act also provided for the establishment of the National Tiger Conservation Authority. It is a statutory body of the ministry of Environment forest and climate change with an overall supervisory and coordination part, performing capacities as given in the Act. Its a mandate to conserve Tiger.
- 12) It gives statutory authority to protect Tiger which was launched in 1973 and has put the endangered tiger on a guaranteed path of revival by protecting it from extinction.