

**CITES**

**Prelims:** Environment- Institutions, Biodiversity

**Mains:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**Why in News?**

- ▶ India has submitted proposals regarding changes to the listing of various wildlife species in the CITES secretariat meeting, scheduled later this month in Geneva, Switzerland.

**CITES:**

- ▶ CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- ▶ The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.
- ▶ Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
- ▶ Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
- ▶ Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. Changes to Appendix III follow a distinct procedure from changes to Appendices I and II, as each Party's is entitled to make unilateral amendments to it.

**How New Species are added into the CITES list:**

- ▶ The Conference of the Parties (CoP), which is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention and comprises all its Parties, has agreed on a set of biological and trade criteria to help determine whether a species should be included in Appendices I or II. At each regular meeting of the CoP, Parties submit proposals based on those criteria to amend these two Appendices. Those amendment proposals are discussed and then submitted to a vote. The Convention also allows for amendments by a postal procedure between meetings of the CoP, but this procedure is rarely used.

- ▶▶ Changes to Appendix III follow a distinct procedure from changes to Appendices I and II, as each Party's is entitled to make unilateral amendments to it.

### Proposal:

- ▶▶ The proposals submitted are regarding changes in the listing of the smooth-coated otter, small-clawed otter, Indian star tortoise, Tokay gecko, wedge fish and Indian rosewood.
- ▶▶ The country seeks to boost the protection of all the five animal species as they are facing a high risk of international trade.
- ▶▶ For the Indian rosewood, the proposal is to remove the species from CITES Appendix II. The species covered by CITES are listed in three appendices on the degree of protection they require.
- ▶▶ India is among the parties proposing the re-listing of the star tortoise from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I. The species faces two threats: loss of habitat to agriculture and illegal harvesting for the pet trade.
- ▶▶ With regard to the two otter species, India, Nepal and the Philippines have proposed that the listing be moved from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I for the more endangered species. A similar proposal has been made to include the Tokay gecko in Appendix I.

