

2. Committee to Oversee Transfer/Import of Wild Animals in India

Prelims Syllabus: Bio Diversity & Its Threat

Mains Syllabus: GS-III Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.



Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has increased the jurisdiction and powers of a high-powered committee led by its former judge, Justice Deepak Verma, to conduct necessary checks concerning the import, transfer, procurement, rescue and rehabilitation of wild animals, including those in captivity, across India.

About the News:

- Before, the committee's powers were only limited to Tripura and Gujarat, but now it has been extended to cover the whole of India.

What are the Major Changes in the Jurisdiction of the Committee?

- State Chief Wildlife Wardens will also be part of the committee, and it will handle all present and future complaints regarding the issue.
- The committee can also consider requests for approval, dispute, or grievance regarding the welfare of wild animals by rescue centres or zoos across India.
- The Supreme court ordered Central and State authorities to report the seizure of wild animals or abandonment of captive wild animals to the committee.

What are the Major Issues Related to Captive Wild Animals in India?

- **Lack of Adequate Facilities:** Many zoos and rescue centres in India are not equipped with the necessary facilities and resources to provide proper care for captive animals.

- ✓ Besides food poisoning, zoo animals also suffer due to animal-human conflict and lack of veterinary care for diseases like hepatitis, tick fever etc.
- ✓ According to CAG audit report 2020 reveals glaring gaps in animal health care in Bengaluru and other state zoos. The Delhi Zoo alone has lost around 450 animals, including tigers and lions due to health reasons.
- **Illegal Trade:** There is a thriving illegal trade in wild animals in India, with many animals being captured and sold for their fur, skin, or for use in traditional medicine.
 - ✓ This has led to a decline in many species, and many captive animals are believed to have been illegally acquired.
 - ✓ **Examples:** Pangolins and Indian star tortoises are illegally traded in India for their meat, skin, or as pets, contributing to the decline of their populations.
- **Inadequate Rehabilitation:** Many rescued animals are not properly rehabilitated before being released back into the wild. This can lead to problems with their survival and adaptation to their natural habitat.

Way Forward:

- **Improved Regulations:** The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 is a crucial regulation for the protection of wildlife in India. However, there is a need to strengthen and update this law to keep up with changing conditions.
- **Protecting Natural Habitats:** Protecting the natural habitats of wild animals is crucial for their survival. This includes efforts to prevent deforestation, poaching, and other threats to their natural habitats.
- **Multisectoral Collaboration:** Collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders is crucial for improving the welfare of captive wild animals in India.
 - ✓ By working
 - ✓ together, they can identify and implement effective solutions to the problems facing these animals.