



## Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972

### Why in news?

Recently a man booked under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 for “illegally” keeping and nursing an injured Sarus crane (*Grus Antigone*).

### What is Sarus crane?

- The Sarus crane is a large non migratory crane found in parts of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and Australia.
- Sarus crane is also found in wetlands.
- Sarus crane is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.
- Sarus crane is the world’s tallest flying bird.

#### Sarus Crane

- **IUCN Red List** - Vulnerable
- **CITES** - Appendix I
- **WPA, 1972** - Schedule I
- **Population** - 15,000-20,000 in India

### What is the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972?

- **Aim** - It aims to conserve protected species in 2 ways
  - By prohibiting hunting
  - By protecting habitat through the creation and regulation of sanctuaries, national parks, reserves, etc.
- **Hunting** - It includes not just the act of killing or poisoning a wild or captive animal, but even an attempt to do so.
- Even injuring or destroying any part of the animal or its eggs or nests is an offence punishable under the Act.
- List includes capturing, coursing, snaring, trapping, driving or baiting any wild or captive animal.
- **Captive animal** - Any animal specified in Schedule I-IV which is captured or kept or bred in captivity.
- The Act prohibits capturing or hunting any species of animals listed under Schedules I-IV.

#### Schedules in WPA

#### Provisions

|                     |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Schedule I and II   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides absolute protection and higher penalties for violations</li></ul>   |  |
|                     | Schedule I   | Schedule II  |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black Buck,</li><li>• Black-Necked Crane,</li><li>• Hooded Crane,</li><li>• Siberian White Crane,</li><li>• Wild Yak, and</li><li>• Andaman Wild Pig</li></ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Common Langur</li><li>• Chameleon</li><li>• King Cobra</li></ul> |
| Schedule III and IV |  |  |
|                     | <div>Schedule III &amp; IV<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chital (spotted deer)</li><li>• Bharal (blue sheep)</li><li>• Hyena,</li><li>• Nilgai,</li><li>• Sambhar (deer),</li><li>• Sponges</li></ul></div> |  |
| Schedule V          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protected but the penalties are lower</li></ul>  |  |
| Schedule V          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Animals listed under are legally considered vermin and may be hunted freely</li></ul>  |  |
| Schedule VI         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are prohibited from cultivation and planting.</li></ul>  |  |

- **Offences** -Under the Act offences are considered as
  - Hunting, unauthorized possession, transport and trade.
  - Offences related to protected areas or habitat destruction.
- **Powers of the state government** - This act allows the State government to appoint a **Chief Wildlife Warden** alongside wildlife wardens, honorary wildlife wardens, and other officers and employees.
- The act empowers the State to constitute a **State Board for Wild Life** consisting of
  - The Chief Minister as Chairperson,
  - The Minister in charge of Forests and Wildlife as the Vice Chairperson
  - At least 3 members of the State legislature.
- **Penalties** - Any person who contravenes any provision of the Act shall be punished with up to 3 years imprisonment or fine up to Rs. 25,000 rupees or both.

*In 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act, the subject of “Forests and Protection of Wild Animals and Birds” was transferred from State to Concurrent List.*

### What is the 2022 Amendment to the WPA?

- **Schedules and increasing penalties** - It brings changes in reducing the number of Schedules and increasing penalties.
- **CITES** - It seeks to implement the provisions of “Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora” ([CITES](#)).
- **Rationalizing schedules** - It seeks to reduce the number of schedules from VI to IV whereby Schedule V for vermin or animals that destroy food crops will be done away

with.

- **More powers to Center** - It accords greater powers to the Centre concerning the export, import, regulation, prohibition, and trade of plant or animal species, through a designated Management Authority.
- **Conservation reserves** - Central government may declare areas adjacent to national parks and sanctuaries as a conservation reserve
- **Invasive alien species** -The central government may authorise an officer to seize and dispose the invasive species.

To know about [Wild Life \(Protection\) Amendment Bill 2021](#)

## References

[The Indian Express](#) | [Sarus Crane](#)



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