

VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS examination

Indian Forest Service - Interview Guidance Program, 2025

**Indian Forest Act, Wildlife Protection
Act, FCA**

by

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INDIAN FOREST ACT (IFA), 1927

Forest Categories under IFA, 1927

Type	Legal Provision	Key Features
Reserved Forests	Sections 3–27	Most restrictive category. Declared by State Government for complete protection. All rights are settled prior to notification. No activities allowed without permission.
Protected Forests	Section 29–34	Government owned land not included in reserved forests. Certain rights exist but regulated. Activities like tree felling, quarrying, cultivation, or grazing may be prohibited or restricted through notifications and rules.
Unclassed Forests	<i>Notified areas not falling under reserved or protected forests</i>	Generally under administrative control of local communities or Revenue Department. least regulated.
Village Forests	Section 28	Reserved forests assigned to village communities for management and use under rules made by the State Government. Community manages for fuelwood, fodder, grazing, etc., under supervision.

Declaration of Reserved Forests - Sections 3–27

1. **Sec 3–4:**
 - State Government may issue a **notification** declaring its intention to constitute any forest land or waste land (Govt property or over which Govt has proprietary rights) as a **Reserved Forest**.
 - Appoints a **Forest Settlement Officer (FSO)** to inquire into and settle rights.
2. **Sec 5:**
 - Prohibits accrual of new rights after issue of notification.
3. **Sec 6–9:**
 - **Forest Settlement Officer** issues **proclamation** inviting claims from persons having rights (grazing, NTFPs, water, cultivation).
 - **Forest Settlement Officer records and settles** all rights through inquiry and hearing.
4. **Sec 10–19:**
 - Rights may be:

- **Admitted**, recorded, and continued;
 - **Modified** by compensation; or
 - **Extinguished** after compensation.
 - For shifting cultivation, special inquiry and orders are made.
5. **Sec 20:**
- After all claims and appeals are settled, the **State Government issues a final notification** clearly specifying the **limits** of the forest and declaring the area as **Reserved Forest**.
6. **Sec 21–27:**
- Deal with **extinction of rights, arbitration, commutation of privileges, and final settlement**.
7. **Section 26.** Acts prohibited in reserve forests.
- Fresh clearing or cultivation after notification.
 - Setting or leaving forest fires unattended.
 - Trespassing or pasturing cattle.
 - Damaging trees or timber.
 - Felling, lopping, burning, or girdling trees.
 - Quarrying, burning lime, collecting or removing forest produce.
 - Breaking land for cultivation or any purpose.
 - Hunting, fishing, or setting traps.

Section 26 – Punishment

- **Imprisonment:** Up to **1 year**
 - **Fine:** Up to **₹1,000**, or both.
 - **Compensation:** Court may order payment for forest damage.
8. **Section 27.** Power to declare forest no longer reserved. / De-reservation of reserved forest
- The State Government may issue a notification declaring any forest or any portion of forest reserved under the Act shall cease to be a reserved forest.
 - However, **rights extinguished** while declaring as reserved forest **shall not revive**.

Provisions to declare Village & Protected forests

Village Forests (Sec 28):

- The State Government may transfer its rights over the reserve forest and assign to any village-community. All forests so assigned shall be called village-forests.

- Management of village forest is carried out by the community **under rules framed by the State Government.**
- Rules regulate:
 - Duties of villagers in forest protection.
 - Products they may take for personal or community use.
 - Restrictions on grazing, cutting, or clearing.
- Applicability
 - All provisions applicable to **Reserved Forests** also apply to **Village Forests**, as long as they are **not inconsistent** with the specific rules for village forest management.

Protected Forests (Sec 29–34):

- **Sec 29:** Govt may declare any forest land or wasteland which is not included in a reserved forest and is the property of Government can be declared as **Protected Forest.**
- **Sec 30:** Govt may:
 - Reserve certain trees or areas.
 - Close forest portions temporarily (not more than 30 years).
 - Prohibit quarrying, grazing, or cultivation.
- **Sec 32:** State Govt empowered to make **rules** regulating cutting, sawing, pasturing, and hunting.
- Key **Distinction:**
 - Section **30** allows the **State Government to prohibit** specific activities.
 - Section **32** empowers it to **regulate** such activities.
- **Sec 33:** Provides **penalties** for violation. (same as sec 26 for reserve forest)

Control over Non-Government Forests - Sections 35, 37, 38

Section	Provision
Section 35	Empowers State Government to regulate or prohibit clearing, burning, grazing, or tree cutting in private or non-government forests , when such acts cause soil erosion, affect water flow, or endanger public health.
Section 37	If private forest owner fails to protect the forest despite regulation, the State Government may take management in hand , ensuring maintenance of forest cover and public safety.
Section 38	State Government may assume control or management of private forests for public purpose or to protect environment and regeneration. It allows agreements with owners for conservation or management consistent with public interest.

Forest Rights and Principles to prevent misuse

Forest Rights

- Under the **Indian Forest Act, 1927**, rights refer to **legal privileges or customary entitlements** of individuals or communities over forest land or forest produce existing **before its declaration as a reserved or protected forest**.
- These include rights of **pasture, forest produce collection, grazing, fishing, or cultivation** that are recognised and settled during the reservation or protection process.

Principles to Prevent Misuse

The IFA empowers the State Government to:

- **Regulate or prohibit** certain activities (Sections 30 & 32) in protected forests such as:
 - Cutting, felling, sawing, or removal of timber.
 - Clearing land for cultivation or building.
 - Quarrying, lime-burning, or grazing beyond limits.
- **Issue notifications** reserving trees or closing parts of forests for regeneration (Sec 30).
- **Frame rules** for licensing, fire protection, cutting grass, hunting, etc. (Sec 32).
- Enforce **penalties and eviction** for contravention (Sec 33).

General guiding principles:

1. **Restriction rather than denial:** rights are regulated, not arbitrarily cancelled.
2. **Protection of environment and regeneration priority.**
3. **Balancing community use with conservation goals.**
4. **Punishment and compensation** for violations to ensure deterrence.

Control of Trade, Possession, and Transit of Timber and Forest Produce

- To **regulate and monitor** the movement, trade, and possession of timber and forest produce, not to ban them.

Section 41 – Regulation of Transit

State Government Powers:

- Control floating of timber in rivers and its transport by land or water.

- Regulate trade and possession of forest produce.

Rules the State Can Make:

Nature of Power: Regulatory to **control and supervise**, not to **prohibit** lawful trade.

- Fix transport routes.
- Allow movement only with valid passes or permits.
- Set rules for issue and fees of passes.
- Check, stop, and mark forest produce in transit.
- Create depots for inspection.
- Remove obstacles in river transport.
- Ban or control cutting, burning, hiding timber, or changing marks.
- Register property marks for ownership proof.
- Give licenses for trade, storage, or possession with fees.

Section 42 – Penalties

For Violations:

- Jail up to **1 year**, or Fine up to **₹1,000**, or both.

Stronger Punishment (Double penalty) if:

- Offence happens at night, or
- Offender resists authority, or
- Has a past conviction for a similar offence.

Forest Offences - Seizure, Confiscation, and Disposal of Property

- Property linked to forest offences is **seized, released, confiscated, disposed of, and appealed.**

Section 52 – Seizure

- If forest offence suspected.
- Forest produce and tools, boats, vehicles, cattle can be seized.
- Must prove it is forest produce.
- Officer marks property and reports to Magistrate.
- No report if property belongs to Government and offender unknown, or offence is compounded.
- Forest/Police may stop and check vehicles.

Section 53 – Release of Seized Property

- Forest Ranger or above may release tools, boats, or vehicles on a bond to produce before Magistrate.
- Forest produce itself **cannot be released.**

Section 55 – Property Liable to Confiscation

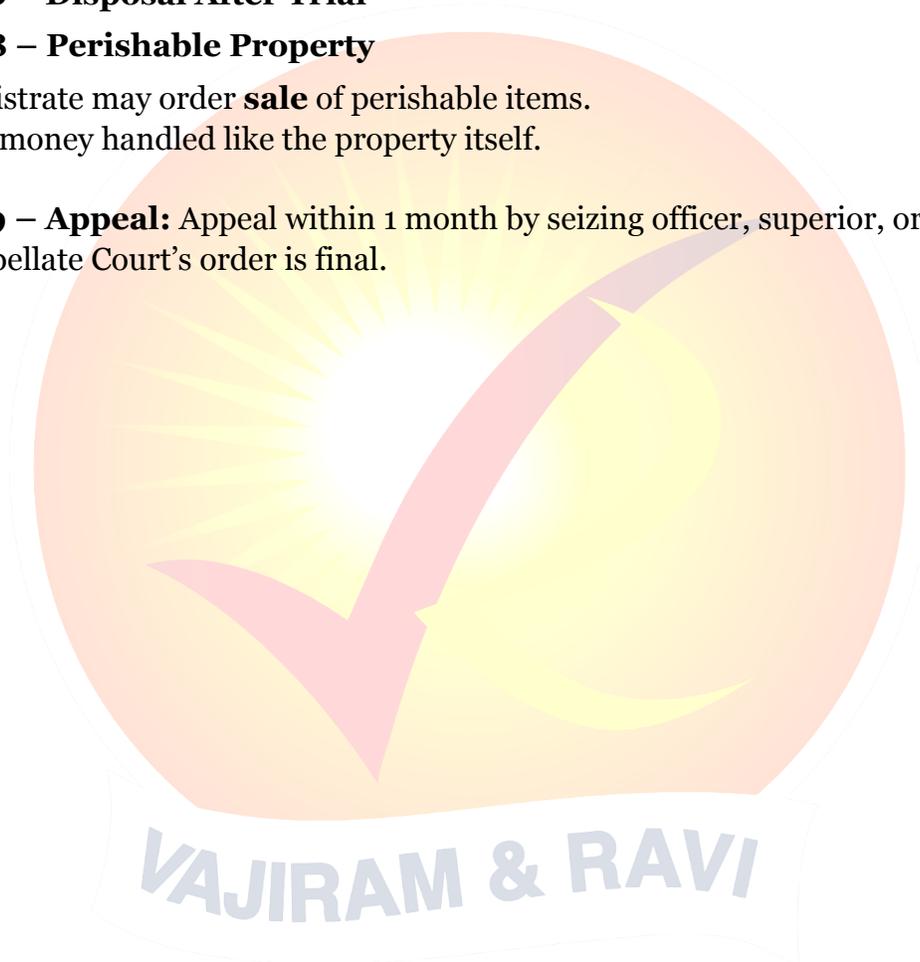
- All non-government forest produce involved in an offence.
- All tools, boats, vehicles, or cattle used in the offence.

Section 56 – Disposal After Trial

Section 58 – Perishable Property

- Magistrate may order **sale** of perishable items.
- Sale money handled like the property itself.

Section 59 – Appeal: Appeal within 1 month by seizing officer, superior, or interested person. Appellate Court's order is final.



Wild life Protection Act 1972

Topics / theme areas

	Important Sections	Theme area
1.	5A to 5C	National Board for Wild Life
2.	6, Sec 6A, Sec 7, Sec 8	State Board for Wild Life
3.	9 to 12	Prohibition of Hunting of an wild animal
4.	17 (a) to (h)	Protection of specified plant
5.	18 to 34	Declaration of wildlife sanctuary
6.	35	Declaration of National Park
7.	36 A, B	Conservation reserve
8.	36 C, B	Community reserve
9.	38 (a) to 38 (i)	Central zoo authority of India
10.	38	NTCA
11.	38 (v)	Tiger conservation Plan
12.	38 (x)	Tiger conservation foundation
13.	38 y	Wild Life Crime Control Bureau.
14.	39 to	Trade or Commerce in Wild Animals, Animal Articles and Trophies
15.	49 D to 49 R	Regulation of International Trade – CITES

National Board for Wildlife NBWL

Constitution of NBWL (Sec. 5A–5C)

- **Statutory apex body (2003):** Prime Minister as the chairperson to promote the conservation and development of wildlife and forests.
- It is a statutory body constituted under Section 5A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- It is the apex body for wildlife in India.

Functions

- **Frame policies & advise Governments** on wildlife conservation; **control poaching & illegal trade.**
- **Recommend** setting up/management of **Protected Areas; restrict activities** in PAs.
- **Impact assessment** of projects/activities on wildlife/habitats.
- **Review conservation progress;** suggest improvement measures.
- **Publish a status report** on wildlife **at least once in two years.**

- **Approve alteration** of PA boundaries (mandatory NBWL approval).

State Board for Wild Life

- Section 6, Sec 6A, Sec 7, Sec 8 of WPA
- Set up at state level in 2003 with the Chief Minister as the chairperson to promote the conservation and development of wildlife and forests. It is a statutory body constituted under Section 5A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Duties

- selection and management of areas to be declared as protected areas
- formulation of the policy for protection and conservation of the wild life and specified plants.
- measures for harmonising the needs of the tribals and other dwellers of the forest with the protection and conservation of wild life

Restrictions on hunting

The Act establishes multi-tier authorities and a strict hunting-ban framework with narrow, written exceptions.

- **Sec. 9: No person shall hunt Schedule I & II wild animals (applies to all, including tribes).**
- **Sec. 11** (written order by **Chief Wild Life Wardens (CWLW)**):
 - **Schedule I:** Only if animal is **dangerous to human life** or **diseased/disabled** and unrecoverable. Need to explore **capture/relocation/rehab** before kill and captive care if needed.
 - **Schedule II:** When **dangerous to human life or property**, or diseased/disabled. Need to explore **capture/relocation/rehab** before kill and captive care if needed.
 - **Self-defence** killing/wounding is **not an offence**.
 - Any hunted/killed/wounded wild animal becomes **Government property**.
- **Sec. 12: Special permits** by **CWLW** for **education, scientific research, zoo/museum specimens**, and **snake-venom** for life-saving drugs (written reasons required).

Protection of Specified Plants (Sec 17A–17H)

Sec 17A – Ban on Picking or Possession

- No one can pick, uproot, damage, sell, or gift **specified plants**.
- **Scheduled Tribe members** may collect for **personal use** in their district.

Sec 17B – Special Permit

- **CWLW** may give written permission for:
 - Education or research
 - Herbarium collection
 - Propagation

Sec 17C – Cultivation: Need **license** to cultivate specified plants.

Sec 17D – Trade: Need **license** to deal or trade in specified plants.

Sec 17E – Declaration: Those already cultivating or trading must **declare stock** to CWLW.

Sec 17F – Possession: Need **license** to keep specified plants.

Sec 17G – Purchase: Can **buy only from licensed dealers**.

Sec 17H – Forfeiture: Seized plants or parts become **Government property**.

Provisions used to declare a Sanctuary (Sec. 18–34)

- **Sec. 18:** Govt **intends to constitute** area as **Sanctuary** (or NP) by notification.
- **Sec. 18(a):** On intention notification, **Secs. 27–33A** come into effect.
- **Sec. 18(b):** Govt appoints **Collector** within **30 days** to enquire rights.
- **Sec. 19–24:** collector **Inquiry** into **existence/nature/extent of rights**. Collector has the powers like civil-court. Collector orders **admitting/rejecting claims**.
- **Sec. 25: Acquisition;** proceedings completed within **2 years** from notification.
- **Sec. 26:** Govt may **delegate** powers; after claims/appeals, area can be **declared as Sanctuary**.
- **Sec. 27–33A: Entry restriction, permit system, ban on destruction, no fires, no weapons, no injurious substances; livestock immunisation** mandate around 5 km
- **Sec. 33(a): arms registration** within 10 km (Sec. 34).

Provisions used to declare a National Park- Section 35

- Provision of sanctuary are exactly same for National Park. But they are under the section 35
- Grazing is not allowed inside the national park

Comparison of conservation reserve and community reserve

Sec 36 A to 36 D

Theme	Conservation Reserve	Community Reserve
Land Ownership	Declared by State Government on Government-owned land , after consulting local communities.	Declared by State Government on private or community-owned land where people voluntarily agree to conserve wildlife.
Relation to Protected Areas	Usually adjacent to National Parks or Sanctuaries or act as corridors linking them.	Land not part of any National Park, Sanctuary, or Conservation Reserve.
Legal Restrictions	Provisions of Sections 18(2), 27(2-4), 30, 32, 33(b)(c) (Wildlife Sanctuary provisions) apply.	No change in land use without committee resolution and State Government approval .
Management Body	Conservation Reserve Management Committee	Community Reserve Management Committee
Powers of Committee	Advises the Chief Wildlife Warden on conservation, management, and maintenance of the reserve.	Committee itself is the authority for management and protection of wildlife and habitat.
Composition of Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative of Forest/Wildlife Dept. (Member-Secretary) - One rep. from each Village Panchayat - 3 NGO reps (wildlife) - One from Agriculture Dept. - One from Animal Husbandry Dept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 5 members nominated by Gram Sabha/Panchayat - One rep. from State Forest/Wildlife Dept.
Chairperson	Chief Wildlife Warden advised by the committee.	Committee elects a Chairman , who acts as Honorary Wildlife Warden .

Central Zoo Authority of India (CZA)

CZA sets zoo standards, monitors performance, manages breeding and research, gives funds, and ensures animal safety in all Indian zoos.

Section 38A – Establishment

- Formed by Central Government.
- Has a Chairperson, Member Secretary, and up to 10 members.

Section 38B – Tenure

- Members hold office for up to 3 years.

Section 38C – Functions

- Set standards for housing and care of zoo animals.
- Evaluate and monitor zoos.
- Recognize / derecognize zoos.
- Identify species for captive breeding and coordinate breeding.
- Maintain and research wildlife in captivity.
- Provide technical help to zoos.

Section 38E – Funding: Central Government gives grants and loans to CZA.

Section 38F – Annual Report: CZA submits annual report of activities to Government.

Section 38G – Audit: Audit report presented before Parliament.

Section 38H – Zoo Recognition: No zoo can operate without CZA approval.

Section 38I – Animal Safety: No one shall tease, feed, or disturb zoo animals.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

Section 38L – Constitution of NTCA

- Formed by **Central Government**.
- **Chairperson:** Minister in charge of MoEF&CC.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Minister of State, MoEF&CC.
- **Members:**
 - 3 Members of Parliament,
 - 8 wildlife experts,
 - Director General of Forests,
 - 6 Chief Wildlife Wardens (from states with Tiger Reserves, on 3-year rotation).

Section 38M – Term of Members

- Members hold office for **up to 3 years**.

Section 38O – Powers and Functions

- **Approve** Tiger Conservation Plans.
- **Evaluate** sustainable and unsustainable use of resources in tiger reserves.
- Set **standards for tourism** in core and buffer areas.
- **Coordinate, research, and monitor** tiger populations and habitats.
- **Provide protection measures and technical, legal, and IT support.**
- **Build capacity** for tiger conservation across states.

Section 38G – Grants and Loans: Central Government may give grants or loans to NTCA for its activities.

Section 38R – Accounts and Audit: NTCA maintains proper accounts, which are audited regularly.

Section 38S – Annual Report: NTCA prepares an annual report on its work and performance.

Section 38T – Submission to Parliament: The annual report and audit report are placed before Parliament.

Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) - Section 38V

1. Protection

- State Government (with NTCA's advice) declares Tiger Reserve.
- Must prepare a Tiger Conservation Plan for protection and management.
- Plan covers tigers, co-predators, prey, and habitat.
- Forest work must support tiger conservation.
- Must also address people's livelihood and development needs.

2. Tiger Habitat

- Core Area: Kept inviolate for tiger conservation but respects rights of STs and forest dwellers.
- Buffer Area: Allows limited human activity; promotes coexistence based on science.

3. Tribes & Resettlement

- No relocation until land rights are settled.
- Can resettle only if:
 - Presence harms tiger habitat,
 - No coexistence option exists, and
 - Consent of Gram Sabha and people is taken.
- Must provide rehabilitation package as per policy.

Section 38W – Boundaries of Tiger Reserve

- Boundaries can change only with approval of NTCA and NBWL.
- Denotification allowed only in public interest with the same approvals.

Section 38X – Tiger Conservation Foundation

- The Tiger Conservation Foundation acts as a support body for tiger reserves, helping raise funds, promote eco-tourism, involve local people, and strengthen conservation through research and training.
- The State Government must set up a Tiger Conservation Foundation to help in the conservation, management, protection, and administration of tiger reserves.

Objectives of the Foundation

- Support ecological, economic, social, and cultural development in tiger reserves.
- Promote eco-tourism with local community participation while protecting the environment.
- Create and maintain necessary infrastructure and assets for tiger conservation.
- Provide technical, financial, legal, and social support for conservation activities.
- Raise and manage funds for stakeholder development and eco-tourism.
- Support research, environmental education, and training related to tiger conservation.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)

- The WCCB acts as India's national agency to fight wildlife crime, linking enforcement, intelligence, and international cooperation to protect endangered species and stop illegal trade.

Section 38Y – Establishment

- The **Central Government** can set up the **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**.
- The **Director of Wildlife Preservation** serves as the **ex-officio Director** of the Bureau.

Section 38Z – Powers and Functions

The Bureau works to **prevent, detect, and control wildlife crime** across India.

Main Functions:

- **Collect and share intelligence** on organized wildlife crimes.
- **Coordinate with State and enforcement agencies** for quick action.
- Maintain a **centralized database** on wildlife crimes.
- **Ensure enforcement** of the Wildlife Protection Act.
- **Support international cooperation** under global conventions and protocols.
- **Assist foreign authorities and international organizations** in wildlife crime control.
- **Build infrastructure and train officials** for scientific investigation of wildlife crimes.
- **Advise the Government of India** on national and international wildlife crime issues and suggest **policy or legal changes**

WPA controlling the Trade or Commerce in Wild Animals, Animal Articles & Trophies

These rules **control possession, sale, transport, and trade** of wild animals or their parts to stop illegal wildlife trade.

Section 39 – Government Ownership

- No wild animal (except **vermin**) can be hunted except under **Section 11** (self-defence or public safety).
- **Banned:** trade in animal articles, trophies, meat, or ivory.
- Hunted animals become **Government property**.
- Must be **reported within 48 hours** to police.
- Cannot sell, gift, or destroy such property **without Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) license**.

Section 40 – Declaration

- Those possessing animal articles **before 1972** must **declare within 30 days** to CWLW. After 1972, need **permission** to own any Scheduled animal.

Section 41 – Enquiry: CWLW can **inspect and record inventories** of Scheduled animals and articles.

Section 42 – Ownership Certificate: CWLW gives **ownership certificates** for legally possessed animals or articles.

Section 43 – Transfer or Sale

- Cannot **sell, gift, or transfer** any animal article or trophy without CWLW approval.
- **Exception: Peacock feathers** allowed.

Section 44 – License: Making or trading trophies **without license** is banned.

Section 45 – Cancellation: CWLW may **cancel or suspend** licenses for violations.

Section 48A – Transport: Need CWLW **permission to transport** animals or trophies.

Section 49 – Purchase: Need CWLW **permission to buy or acquire** wild or captive animals or their articles.

Sections 49A–49B – Definition & Ban

- **49A:** Defines **Scheduled animals** (those legally protected).
- **49B: Completely bans trade** in trophies or articles from Scheduled animals.

WPA regulation on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

(Chapter V-B – Wildlife Protection Act, 1972)

Aligns India's wildlife trade laws with CITES to control the import, export, possession, transfer, and breeding of endangered species.

Section 49D – Management Authority

- Central Government appoints a senior officer (Addl. DG of Forests or above).
- Main duties:
 - Issue permits and certificates for trade.
 - Send annual/biennial reports to Government.

- Follow CITES procedures.
- Can appoint or delegate powers to other officers.
- Ensures trade is licensed, tracked, and reported.

Section 49F – Scientific Authority

- Central Government designates research institutes.
- Functions:
 - Advise on CITES matters.
 - Monitor exports of Appendix II species.
 - Recommend limits if trade harms wild populations.
- Ensures trade is scientifically safe for species.

Section 49H – Restriction on Trade

- No one can trade CITES-listed species without following CITES rules.
- Prevents illegal or unauthorized trade.

Section 49I – Export Conditions

- Export of Appendix I or II species needs prior export permit.
- Ensures strict export control.

Section 49J – Import Conditions

- Import of Appendix I species needs prior import permit.
- Regulates entry of endangered species into India.

Section 49M – Possession & Breeding

- Anyone keeping a live CITES species must report to the Management Authority.
- Helps in recording and monitoring captive animals.

Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022 - Key Highlights

- To strengthen wildlife conservation and align Indian law with international standards while simplifying regulation and enforcement.

1. CITES Integration (Section 49M)

- Brings India's law in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- Requires registration of possession, transfer, birth, and death of animals listed in CITES Appendix I and other schedules.
- Ensures better control of trade in endangered species.

2. Regulation of Captive Breeding (Section 49N)

- Anyone involved in captive breeding or artificial propagation of scheduled species (Schedule IV) must obtain a license within 90 days of the Act's start.
- Helps monitor and control breeding of endangered animals.

3. Streamlined Registration (PARIVESH 2.0 Portal)

- Registration, transfer, and reporting of births/deaths of scheduled species now handled online through the PARIVESH 2.0 portal.
- Promotes efficiency and transparency in wildlife record management.

4. Revised Penal Provisions

- Some minor offences decriminalized.
- Focus shifted from punishment to fines and compliance.
- Simplifies enforcement while keeping conservation focus intact.

5. Changes in Schedules

- Earlier, the 1972 Act had six schedules.
- The 2022 Amendment reduces them to four to simplify classification.

Old Structure (1972)	New Structure (2022)
Schedule I – Highest protection	Schedule I – Highest protection
Schedule II–IV – Lower protection	Schedule II–III – Varying protection
Schedule V – Vermin	Schedule IV – CITES-listed species

- Integration with CITES: Species in CITES Appendices are now clearly listed in Indian schedules for better global coordination.

6. Vermin (Section 62)

- Central Government can declare certain species (like wild boar, nilgai, monkeys) as vermin in specific areas for limited periods.
- Such declarations must now be scientifically justified and consistent with conservation goals.
- Helps address human–wildlife conflicts responsibly.



Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and Van (*Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan*) *Adhiniyam, 2023*

Purpose of the act:

- To **stop diversion of forest land** for non-forestry uses without approval from the **Central Government**.

Comparison between FCA 1980 and FCA, 2023

Aspect	Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980	Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023
Objective / Purpose	Prevent diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes without Central Government approval.	Balance forest conservation with developmental, strategic, and economic needs while contributing to Net Zero and carbon sink goals.
Name of the Act	Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980	<i>Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 2023</i>
Applicability / Scope	Applied to all forest land.	Applies to land declared/notified as forest under IFA 1927 or other laws, and land recorded as forest after 25 Oct 1980.
Definition of Forest Land	Not specifically defined; interpreted through judicial rulings (e.g. <i>T.N. Godavarman</i>).	Defined under Section 1A, includes notified and recorded forest land; excludes land converted to non-forest use before 12 Dec 1996.
Restrictions	imposed blanket restrictions on diversion of forest land.	provide measured exemptions for strategic and developmental purposes.
Regulating Authority	Central Government approval mandatory for diversion of forest land.	Central Government retains approval power and can issue binding directions under Section 3C.
Activities Requiring Approval	De-reservation, non-forest use, leasing, or clearing of forest land.	Same core restrictions continue, but with expanded clarity and defined exemptions.
Permitted Activities in Forest Areas	Limited: scientific research, education, forest and wildlife management.	Expanded: silviculture, eco-tourism, zoos, check-posts, fire lines, waterholes, bridges, and other conservation activities.
Exempted Lands / Activities	No explicit exemptions.	Exemptions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.10 ha along roads/rail lines for public use • Tree plantations on non-forest land • Strategic projects within 100 km of

		borders • Security & public utility projects in Left Wing Extremism-affected areas.
Treatment of Tree Plantations	Not distinguished separately.	Clarifies that plantations and afforestation on non-forest land are excluded from forest definition.
Exceptions	Only for scientific research, education, and conservation.	Broader: includes scientific survey, reconnaissance, and exploration activities.
Advisory Committee	Constituted by Central Government under Section 3 to examine proposals.	Continues under Central Government with enhanced coordination and implementation authority.
Penalty	Imprisonment up to 15 days for violations.	Focus shifts from punishment to regulatory compliance and management.
Compensatory Afforestation	Not detailed within the 1980 Act itself.	Linked to compensatory afforestation requirements and offsetting conditions as per Central Government guidelines.
Emphasis on Climate Goals	Not mentioned.	Includes preamble highlighting India's Net Zero 2070, carbon sink creation (2.5–3.0 billion tonnes CO ₂), and increasing forest cover to one-third of land area.
Administrative Mechanism	Central approval system.	Adds Central power to issue directions to States/UTs for uniform implementation.
Developmental Considerations	Restrictive approach toward development in forest areas.	Balances conservation with eco-tourism, infrastructure, and defence projects under regulated exemptions.
Focus Area	Primarily regulatory and prohibitory.	Integrates conservation, climate commitment, and sustainable development objectives.

Activities permitted inside the forest by FCA

- Forestry activities other than those mentioned as **Non-forestry purposes are permitted inside forest (FCA 1980)**
- 2023 Amendment act Expanded List of Permitted Conservation Activities

The following activities are not treated as non-forest purposes under the amended Section 2 (2023 AA):

Category	Permitted Activities	Purpose/Benefit
Silviculture and Regeneration	• Silvicultural operations and regeneration of degraded forests	Promotes scientific forest management and productivity improvement
Forest Protection Infrastructure	• Construction of check-posts, watchtowers, fencing, and other protection measures	Strengthens anti-poaching and fire protection systems
Fire Prevention Measures	• Fire lines and fire control infrastructure	Minimizes wildfire risks and habitat destruction
Communication Facilities	• Wireless communication towers and related infrastructure	Enhances connectivity for forest management and emergency response
Water and Habitat Management	• Construction of check dams, water holes, and bridges	Supports wildlife water needs and eco-restoration
Wildlife & Eco-Tourism Development	• Establishment of zoos and safaris under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (only in non-protected areas) • Eco-tourism projects included in approved working plans	Encourages conservation-linked tourism and awareness
Other Conservation Works	• Any other activity notified by the Central Government for ecological restoration	Allows adaptive inclusion of future conservation needs

Exemptions for Survey and Research Activities

- Scientific surveys (including seismic surveys) for reconnaissance, prospecting, and exploration shall not be treated as non-forest activities, subject to terms and conditions set by the Central Government.

VAJIRAM & RAVI