

LASD EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

LASDES E-JOURNAL
(Volume II ISSUES I)

ISSN: 2455-3832

February 2026

DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Editor-in-chief of LASDES Journal. The Editorial Team of LASDES

Journal holds the copyright to all articles contributed to this publication. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of LASDES. Though all efforts are made to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the information published, LASDES shall not be responsible for any errors caused due to oversight otherwise.

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR IN CHIEF:

Mr. Devaang Savla

BCL, University of Oxford. Practicing in High Court of Judicature of Allahabad.

EDITOR:

Ms. Aparna Bajpai

Public Policy Analyst.

EDITOR:

Mr. Ayush Khanna

B. Com LL. B, Amity University, Noida Practicing in High Court of Judicature at Allahabad.

EDITOR:

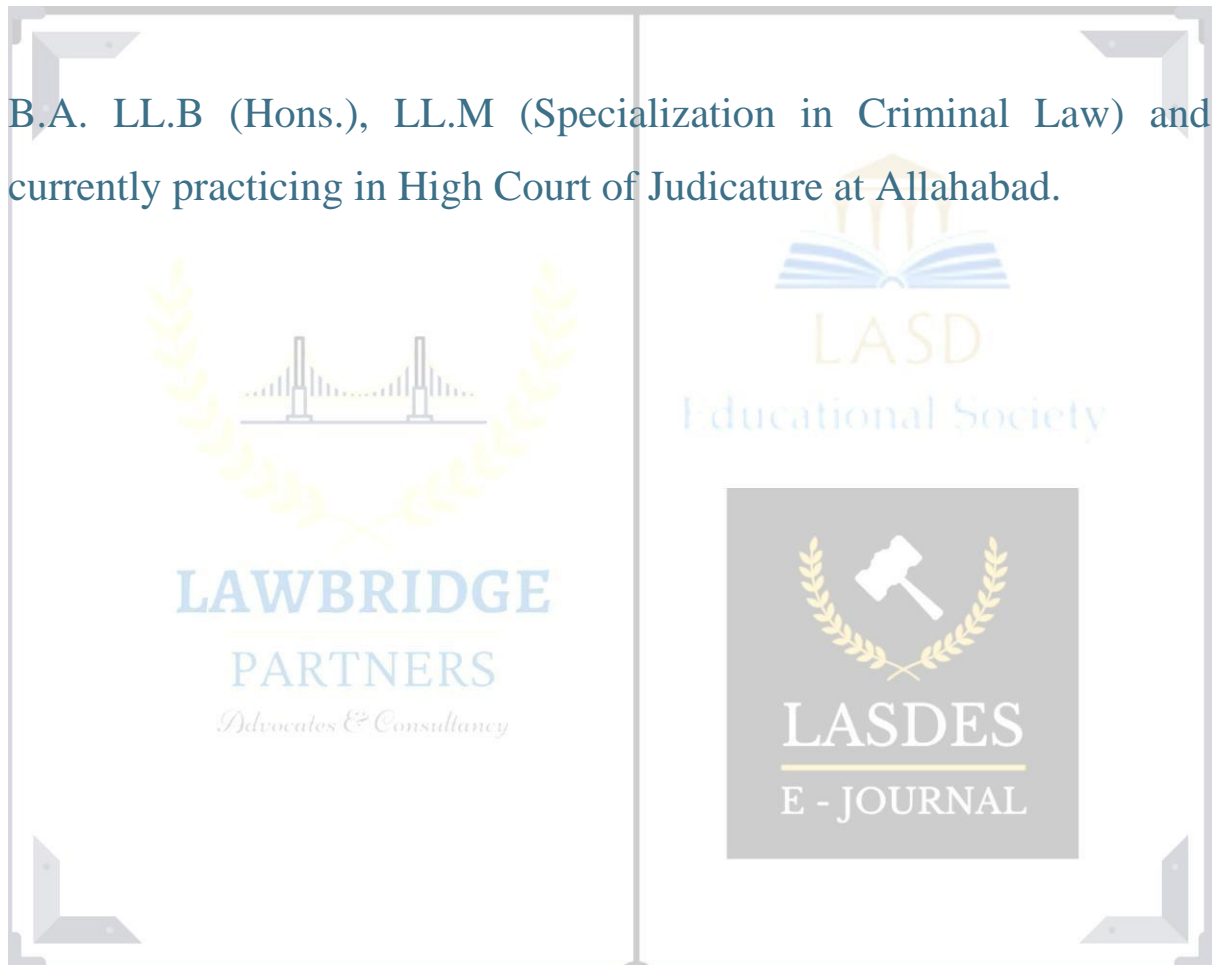
Mr. Tanmay Sadh




B.A. LL. B (Hons.) from University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun, currently practicing in High Court of Judicature at Allahabad.

PROJECT HEAD:

Mr. Utkarsh Srivastava

B.A. LL.B (Hons.), LL.M (Specialization in Criminal Law) and currently practicing in High Court of Judicature at Allahabad.





**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GLOBAL
WILDLIFE LEGISLATION AND THE
INDIAN WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT,
1972 – SWARNJEET SWARNKAR**

ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss the efforts being made at the global level for the protection of wildlife, with special emphasis on important international conventions such as CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and important regional legislation on the protection of wildlife in various continents.

This paper will also focus on the important legislation on the conservation of wildlife in India, including the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. This paper will also discuss the important challenges faced in the conservation of wildlife, including poaching, habitat destruction, human-wildlife conflict, and climate change.

Keyword: Wildlife Protection, Biodiversity Conservation, Endangered Species, Climate Change, Sustainable Development



INTRODUCTION

Global Wildlife Protection refers to the efforts put forth globally to protect and conserve species of wildlife. This area of concern deals with a variety of issues, such as poaching, destruction of habitats, and climate change. There is a collective effort by organizations and governments to create protected sites, legislation, and promotion of sustainable use. The aim is to ensure that species do not become extinct and that biodiversity is maintained, which is vital for maintaining ecological balance.

The role of wildlife conservation should not be underestimated. Wildlife is very important in maintaining the health of ecosystems. Predators, herbivores, and other animals are involved in the natural cycles that sustain plant life and other species.

In addition, wildlife has great cultural, economic, and ecological significance. Many people rely on animals for their livelihoods, whether it is tourism, fishing, or farming.

Finally, maintaining biodiversity is essential in ensuring that it is not affected by environmental changes and natural disasters. The extinction of one species can have a ripple effect, causing disruptions in food chains and ecosystems.

Therefore, protecting wildlife is not only about protecting species but also about protecting the natural world and ultimately, humanity.

Global overview of Wildlife Protection Acts:

Wildlife protection is a critical component of global conservation efforts, aiming to preserve biodiversity and maintain ecosystem health. This overview explores key international agreements and conventions, as well as major regional wildlife protection acts across various continents.

Key International Agreements and Conventions:

- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora):

CITES, established in 1975, is one of the most prominent international agreements dedicated to wildlife protection. It aims to ensure that international trade in wild animal and plant specimens does not threaten their survival. The convention categorizes species into three appendices, each with different levels of protection. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction that are prohibited from international trade,

while Appendices II and III encompass species that require varying degrees of control.¹

CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity):

The CBD, adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, focuses on the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. It provides a framework for national strategies and action plans to protect biodiversity. The CBD also supports initiatives like the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which aim to address biodiversity loss and promote conservation efforts globally.²

Major Wildlife Protection Acts in Different Regions:

North America

- **United States:** The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 is a cornerstone of U.S. wildlife protection. It aims to protect and recover species listed as endangered or threatened.

The act provides for the designation of critical habitats and the development of recovery plans. The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 also protects marine mammals from harassment and depletion.

¹ WIKIPEDIA, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CITES>, (last visited August 4, 2024)

² WIKIPEDIA, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity, (last visited August 4, 2024)

- Canada: Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) was enacted in 2002 to prevent Canadian species from becoming extinct or extirpated. It focuses on assessing the status of species, protecting critical habitats, and developing recovery strategies.

Europe

- European Union: The EU's Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) are fundamental to European wildlife protection. The Birds Directive safeguards all wild bird species in Europe, while the Habitats Directive aims to protect natural habitats and species of community interest. Both directives are part of the Natura 2000 network, which is a network of protected areas across the EU.
- United Kingdom: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is a key piece of legislation in the UK that provides protection for wildlife and natural habitats. It includes provisions for the protection of endangered species and sites of special scientific interest.

Africa

- South Africa: The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) of 2004 is central to biodiversity protection in South Africa. It provides for the conservation of biodiversity and regulates the management of protected areas and species. The Act also addresses invasive species and the protection of ecosystems.

- Kenya: The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 aims to conserve wildlife and their habitats in Kenya. It establishes the Kenya Wildlife Service and provides guidelines for managing wildlife reserves and combating poaching.

- Australia: The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is Australia's primary legislation for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. It provides for the protection of listed threatened species and ecological communities, as well as the management of protected areas.

- India: The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 is the principal legislation in India for wildlife conservation. It

includes provisions for the establishment of protected areas, the regulation of hunting, and the protection of endangered species.

South America

- **Brazil:** The Brazilian Forest Code, updated in 2012, includes provisions for the protection of forests and biodiversity. It requires landowners to maintain a percentage of their land as native vegetation and regulates deforestation.
- **Colombia:** The National Environmental System (SINA) established by the National Environmental Law of 1993 supports wildlife conservation through the establishment of protected areas and the regulation of natural resource use.

Wildlife protection in India has a rich history that reflects the country's cultural reverence for nature and the complex interplay of colonial and indigenous influences.

Ancient and Traditional Practices:

Historically, the Indian way of protecting wildlife was deeply embedded in its spiritual and cultural heritage. The Vedas and the Mahabharata, ancient texts and scriptures, emphasized the

need for nature conservation. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, in turn, preached the need for non-violence (ahimsa) and compassion towards all forms of life. The sacred groves, which are protected forested areas surrounding temples, and the reverence for animals like cows and elephants, are examples of how these religions shaped the conservation of wildlife. Monarchs and rulers maintained hunting grounds and protected species, not only for their own enjoyment but also as a symbol of their concern for the well-being of the environment.

Colonial Era Legislation:

The colonial period brought significant changes to wildlife protection in India. British colonial rulers, recognizing the economic value of India's natural resources, implemented various regulations. The British introduced the concept of game laws, which aimed to control hunting and conserve species deemed valuable or threatened. One of the earliest pieces of legislation was the Wild Birds Protection Act of 1887, which sought to safeguard certain bird species from indiscriminate hunting. However, these laws often served

colonial interests rather than genuine conservation efforts, and hunting for sport remained prevalent among the British elite.

Towards the late colonial period, awareness of ecological conservation began to grow, influenced by global environmental movements. The Forest Act of 1927 and the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 marked a significant shift towards more formal and systematic conservation strategies, laying the groundwork for modern wildlife protection efforts.

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India):

Background and Enactment:

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, was a landmark piece of legislation enacted by the Government of India to address the declining wildlife populations and habitat destruction occurring across the country. The Act was introduced in response to the growing concerns about the threats to wildlife from poaching, illegal trade, and habitat degradation. India, being home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, recognized the need for a comprehensive legal framework to ensure the protection of its wildlife and their natural habitats. The Act

was part of a broader environmental movement during the early 1970s, reflecting the global awareness of conservation issues and the urgent need to take action.³

The primary objectives of the Act were to provide a legal framework for the conservation of wildlife and to regulate activities that could harm wildlife and their habitats. Its enactment marked a significant step in India's environmental protection efforts, aligning with international conservation practices and setting the stage for future conservation initiatives.⁴

Key Provisions:

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, encompasses several key provisions designed to protect wildlife and their habitats. One of the central elements of the Act is the establishment of a regulatory framework for hunting and trade in wildlife. The Act prohibits the hunting of wild animals and birds, except under specific circumstances where the government grants permission for scientific research or for the control of disease. It also regulates the trade and commerce in wildlife products,

³ BYJUS, <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/wildlife-protection-act-1972/>, (last visited August 4, 2024)

⁴ Ibid

ensuring that such activities are controlled and monitored to prevent illegal practices.⁵

Additionally, the Act provides for the creation of protected areas, including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, to safeguard critical habitats and ensure the survival of endangered species. It mandates the appointment of wildlife wardens and the establishment of special courts to handle wildlife-related offenses, thus ensuring that violations of the Act are prosecuted effectively.⁶

Protected Species and Categories:

Under the Wildlife Protection Act, wildlife is categorized into different schedules based on the level of protection required. The Act divides species into six schedules, each offering varying degrees of protection:

- Schedule I: Species listed in this schedule are given the highest level of protection. It includes many endangered species, such as the Bengal tiger, Indian elephant, and the snow leopard. Hunting or trade involving these species is strictly prohibited.⁷

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

- Schedule II: Species listed here are also protected, though they may not face the same level of threat as those in Schedule I. The trade of these species is regulated and requires permission.⁸
- Schedule III: This schedule includes species that are protected, but the level of protection is not as stringent as that for species in Schedules I and II. The hunting or trade of these species is controlled.⁹
- Schedule IV: Species in this category are protected, but they face a lower level of threat compared to those in higher schedules. Regulations apply to their hunting and trade.¹⁰
- Schedule V: Species listed in Schedule V are considered vermin and can be hunted or captured without a permit. This category typically includes species that are deemed to be in conflict with human interests.¹¹
- Schedule VI: This schedule deals with plants and provides for the protection of endangered plant species.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

Cultivation, collection, and trade of these plants are regulated to prevent their extinction.¹²

Conservation Reserves and National Parks:

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, facilitates the creation of protected areas such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. These areas play a crucial role in conservation efforts:

- **National Parks:** These are designated areas where wildlife and their habitats are protected from human interference. National parks are established to conserve the ecological integrity of large areas of land and to ensure the survival of various species. They are managed with strict regulations to preserve their natural state and biodiversity.¹³
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** These areas offer protection to specific species and their habitats. Unlike national parks, wildlife sanctuaries may allow some degree of human activity, such as controlled tourism or traditional

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

practices, as long as they do not interfere with wildlife conservation efforts.¹⁴

Conservation reserves, often created within the framework of the Wildlife Protection Act, aim to protect specific ecosystems and species. These reserves support wildlife conservation by providing safe habitats and by facilitating scientific research and environmental education.

Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980:

The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at conserving forest land and preventing deforestation. Enacted by the Government of India, this Act restricts the use of forest land for non-forest purposes and mandates that any diversion of forest land for such purposes requires prior approval from the central government. The Act was introduced in response to the growing concerns over deforestation and its impact on ecological balance. It emphasizes the need for forest conservation and sustainable management by placing stringent controls on deforestation activities and promoting reforestation efforts. The Act also

¹⁴ Ibid

facilitates the implementation of conservation projects and encourages state governments to manage forest resources effectively.¹⁵

National Wildlife Action Plan:

The National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP) is a comprehensive policy framework designed to guide wildlife conservation efforts in India. The first plan was launched in 1983, with subsequent revisions in 2002 and 2017. The NWAP outlines strategies for the protection of wildlife habitats, the preservation of endangered species, and the promotion of sustainable wildlife management practices. It emphasizes the importance of creating protected areas, enhancing ecological connectivity, and involving local communities in conservation efforts.

The NWAP also highlights the need for scientific research and monitoring to inform wildlife conservation strategies. By providing a structured approach to wildlife conservation, the NWAP aims to address the challenges posed by habitat loss, poaching, and human – wildlife conflicts.¹⁶

Biodiversity Act, 2002:

¹⁵ BYJUS, <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/forest-conservation-act-1980/>, (last visited August 4, 2024)

¹⁶ BYJUS, (last visited August 4, 2024) <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/third-national-wildlife-action-plan/>.

The Biodiversity Act, 2002, represents a significant step in India's commitment to conserving its rich biodiversity. The Act aims to conserve biological diversity, ensure the sustainable use of its components, and promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from its use. It establishes the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) to oversee the implementation of the Act and manage access to biological resources. The Act also mandates the creation of State Biodiversity Boards and Biodiversity Management Committees at the local level to facilitate grassroots involvement in conservation efforts. By integrating traditional knowledge and ensuring community participation, the Biodiversity Act seeks to protect India's diverse ecosystems and support sustainable development.¹⁷

Advocates & Consultancy

Challenges and Issues in Wildlife Conservation in India: Poaching and Illegal Trade:

Poaching and illegal trade pose significant threats to wildlife in India. Species such as tigers, elephants, and rhinoceroses are often targeted for their body parts, which are highly valued in black markets. Despite strict laws and increased

¹⁷ BYJUS, (last visited August 4, 2024) <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/biological-diversity-act-2002/>.

patrolling, poaching networks are sophisticated and persistent, making it difficult to eradicate this issue. The demand for animal parts in traditional medicine and for trophies fuels this illegal trade, placing immense pressure on endangered species.

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation:

The rapid expansion of agriculture, urbanization, and infrastructure development has led to severe habitat loss and fragmentation in India. Forests and wetlands are being cleared or altered, reducing the available space for wildlife and disrupting ecosystems. This fragmentation isolates animal populations, impeding their ability to migrate, find mates, and access resources. The resulting loss of biodiversity threatens not only individual species but the health of entire ecosystems.

Human-Wildlife Conflict:

Human-wildlife conflict arises when animals encroach on human settlements or agricultural areas, leading to property damage and sometimes human casualties. This conflict is often driven by habitat encroachment and resource

competition. In response, wildlife can be killed or relocated, disrupting their natural behaviours and contributing to population declines.

Effective conflict mitigation strategies are essential to balance human and wildlife needs.

Climate Change Impacts:

Climate change exacerbates existing conservation challenges by altering habitats, food availability, and migration patterns. Shifts in temperature and weather patterns can lead to habitat degradation and increased frequency of extreme events, such as floods and droughts. These changes affect species' survival and reproduction rates, making it harder for them to adapt. Conservation efforts must address these evolving threats to ensure long-term protection of India's wildlife.

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Public Participation

Key NGOs in Wildlife Conservation:

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in wildlife conservation.

Prominent NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lead global efforts to protect endangered species and their habitats. The WWF focuses on preserving biodiversity through sustainable practices and partnerships. The WCS conducts scientific research and conservation efforts across the globe, managing over 500 projects in nearly 60 countries. The IUCN works on policy development, providing knowledge and tools to conserve nature and ensure sustainable resource use. These organizations often collaborate with governments, local communities, and other stakeholders to implement effective conservation strategies.

Community Involvement and Awareness Campaigns:

Community involvement is essential for the success of wildlife conservation initiatives.

NGOs engage local communities through education and awareness campaigns, emphasizing the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect wildlife. Programs such as community-based conservation empower locals to take an active role in protecting their natural resources. Awareness

campaigns, often utilizing media, social platforms, and educational workshops, aim to change public attitudes and behaviours towards wildlife. By fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility, these campaigns help create sustainable conservation efforts that benefit both the environment and local communities. Involvement in decision-making processes ensures that conservation strategies are culturally appropriate and widely accepted, leading to more effective and enduring outcomes.

Strengthening Legislation and Enforcement:

Future directions should focus on reinforcing legislative frameworks to address emerging challenges. This includes updating laws to reflect technological advancements, environmental concerns, and social issues. Stronger enforcement mechanisms are essential to ensure compliance and deter violations. Governments should allocate resources for regulatory agencies, enhancing their capacity to monitor, investigate, and penalize non-compliance.

Transparency and accountability in enforcement practices will build public trust and improve the overall effectiveness of the legal system.

Promoting Sustainable Development:

Sustainable development should be at the forefront of policy agendas to balance economic growth with environmental preservation and social equity. Future strategies must integrate sustainability principles across all sectors, encouraging the adoption of green technologies and renewable energy sources. Policies should promote circular economies, reducing waste and encouraging recycling. Education and awareness campaigns can foster a culture of sustainability, motivating individuals and businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices. Investment in sustainable infrastructure and green jobs will support long-term economic stability and environmental health.

Enhancing International Cooperation:

Global challenges such as climate change, cyber threats, and pandemics necessitate robust international cooperation. Future efforts should focus on strengthening multilateral institutions and frameworks to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing. Countries must work together to harmonize regulations, share best practices, and provide technical and financial support to developing nations. Enhanced cooperation can lead to more effective responses to global issues, ensuring

that collective action is timely and impactful. Building strong diplomatic relationships and fostering trust among nations will be critical to achieving these goals.



CONCLUSION

The article provides a comprehensive overview of global wildlife protection, emphasizing the significance of international agreements such as CITES and the CBD. It highlights major regional wildlife protection acts across continents, such as the ESA in the United States and India's Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. The importance of historical and cultural contexts, challenges in conservation efforts like poaching and habitat loss, and the role of NGOs and public participation are also discussed. Furthermore, the article compares legislative frameworks across countries and stresses the need for community involvement and awareness campaigns.

The Importance of Ongoing Efforts and Global Solidarity:

Continued and concerted efforts in wildlife conservation are crucial for maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance. Addressing challenges like climate change, habitat fragmentation, and illegal wildlife trade requires persistent global collaboration and robust legislative frameworks. Enhancing international cooperation, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and promoting sustainable development are vital steps toward safeguarding wildlife. The

role of NGOs and public participation in conservation efforts cannot be overstated, as community involvement ensures culturally appropriate and sustainable outcomes. Global solidarity, supported by education, awareness campaigns, and transparent enforcement, is essential to effectively tackle the complexities of wildlife conservation, ensuring the preservation of our natural world for future generations.

