

TRADE ON WILD ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY IN INDIAN PROSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the dual structure of animal-based economies in India, focusing on the predominantly illegal wildlife trade alongside the regulated animal production sector, particularly livestock and dairying. Despite India's global leadership in wildlife conservation—evidenced by the rise in its tiger population to approximately 3,682 during the 2022–2026 period—the country continues to remain a significant hotspot for illicit wildlife trafficking, driven by international demand for exotic pets and traditional medicinal products.

At the same time, the domestic animal production sector plays a crucial role in the national economy. By 2026, beef (carabeef) production is projected to reach approximately 4.7 million metric tons (MMT), highlighting its economic importance. This research critically evaluates the effectiveness of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (as amended in 2022), in addressing illegal wildlife trade. It also examines key socio-economic drivers—such as poverty, illiteracy, and market demand—that continue to facilitate and sustain illicit trafficking activities in India.

INTRODUCTION

The word "WILDLIFE" refers to any animals, butterflies, fish and aquatic or land vegetation which forms part of any habitat⁹¹⁹. The word "Trade" refers to exchange (something) for something else, typically as a commercial transaction. So, when we say about the Wildlife Trade, it means the exchange of animal products derived from non-domesticated animals or even Plants, from their natural environment and which is being Traded illegally Across globally

Wildlife can be found in all ecosystems. Deserts, forests, rain forests, plains, grasslands, other areas including the most developed urban sites, all have distinct forms of wildlife. Wildlife trade is an issue from the bottom of the heart of the

tension between human development and biodiversity conservation. Every person i.e. human life is depended upon the wild animal products for trade and economy. These products from animals are used for Medicinal purpose or for construction, food and culture or for any other products that man wants for him to develop

The involvement of thousands of Floras (Plant life) and Fauna (Animal Life) in illegal trade provides many a good source of income. The legal trade in wildlife is overshadowed by wildlife crime and illegal trade. From the income of Producers, a raw material for business and local collectors plays an important role in the wildlife trade. Even there are millions of consumers worldwide for the goods that have been traded.

⁹¹⁹Section 2 (37) Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

It plays an undeniable role in the regional, national or at the international level. The responsible, legal benefits and the sustainable wildlife trade are largely going unnoticed throughout the world which causes many implications in the biodiversity and environment.

The trade of wild animals illegally across the global market has increased the understanding and revealed that corruption is a key facilitator of this profitable and pervasive. An important study shows that Asia, particularly China and south-east Asian countries, are the main focal point of the supply and demands of the illegal trade animals. The corruption in wildlife plays a major role in the supply many things through or to Asia. There are many illegal acts that fall within the broad categories of things which are against the wildlife trade.

As the illegal wildlife trade is between \$10- \$20 billion USD per year, the routes may have different from America to Asia, Europe, etc. where the conservationist say that the main problem is on the part of southeast Asia. The law enforcement, weaker borders with high profit and low risk, make Key markets in China, America, and European Union the most powerful in wildlife trade. The wildlife trade in Asia from the Bangkok city is the hub of illicit trade.

When we take about Indian Perspective, we can still see that there are amounts of illegal trade that are happening in every part. India is one of the world's biodiversity spots in the world where there are many endangered species lives, yet there is a lot of illegal trade happening in India and that to these endangered species. Many animals and birds are illegally traded through and from India are rare and endangered too. Endangered animals are in India are also traded throughout the country for its benefits in the world market.

India has a strong legal framework and policy frame to regulate and restrict wildlife trade. Trade over 2000 species of flora and fauna is prohibited under the Wildlife (Protection) Act,

1972. To quell this trade WWF-India through TRAFFIC gives training and builds capacity in its frontline apart from the government and other enforcement agencies. Still, in India, there is a lot of smuggling happening throughout the country for this the international markets have an eye on Indian soil because of its rich biodiversity and eco-friendly nature

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Wildlife protection predates independence: The 1910 Elephants Preservation Act and 1935 Indian Fisheries Act laid early groundwork, but post-1947 exploitation surged with population growth⁹²⁰ The WPA, 1972, enacted amid global conservation waves (Stockholm 1972), centralized control via Schedules I-VI, banning trade in endangered species.⁹²¹ Key amendments—1982 (tiger focus), 1991 (ivory ban), 2002 (WCCB creation), 2006 (penalties hiked to 7 years), and 2022 (CITES alignment, rationalized schedules)—reflect adaptive responses.⁹²² Pre-WPA, princely states permitted hunting; post-independence, unchecked trade depleted tigers from 40,000 (1900) to 1,411 (1972). International pressures via CITES (1976 accession) integrated export controls.

CONCEPT OF WILDLIFE

Although the term "wildlife" usually refers to undomesticated animal species, it can also apply to any animal that evolves and survives in its natural habitat without human interference. There can be wildlife in any type of environment. Different fauna may be found in deserts, woods, rainforests, and other places. Categories, including the most developed urban regions. Scientists have claimed in popular culture that human activity has an impact on wildlife, but in actuality, wildlife refers to creatures that are unaffected by societal forces. Throughout the nation, more than 120 national parks, 18 bio-reserves, and more than 500 animal sanctuaries preserve the world's unique biodiversity. India is home to four of the 36

⁹²⁰ ipleaders

⁹²¹ indidcode.inc.in

⁹²² Blog.lukmaanas.com (an analysis of the wildlife protection amendment act 2022)

biodiversity hotspots in the world as well as some of the most biodiversity regions on earth.

the Sundarbans, Indo-Burma, and the Eastern Himalayas. Wildlife management is part of the protection of rare and endangered endemic species. One of the 17 mega-diverse nations is India.

A major interchange of species was started by the following march toward and collision with Peninsular India. However, many indigenous Indian taxa became extinct 20 million years ago because to climatic change and volcanism. In order to preserve important habitat, India passed the Tiger Plan and the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972. In the 1980s, more federal protections were passed. Today, India has 515 wildlife sanctuaries, 18 biosphere reserves, 10 of which are part of the World Biosphere Reserve Network, and 26 wetlands that are listed under the Ramsar Convention.

THE WILDLIFE TRADE: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

India’s rich biodiversity country holding nearly 8% of the world’s species makes it a primary target for poachers. India faces significant challenges with wildlife trade, serving as a source, transit hub, and destination for illegal trafficking of species like tigers, Pangolins, and star tortoises. The wildlife (protection) Act,1972, prohibits trade in over 1,800 native species, while CITES

membership since 1976 regulates international dealings⁹²³

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, bans trade in scheduled animals and derivatives through chapters like VA and VB, with penalties including imprisonment⁵ Recent 2024 rules relaxed licensing for some Schedule II species but require central approval for Schedule ⁹²⁴. CITES enforces permits via the Directorate of Wildlife Preservation, though enforcement gaps persist for exotic imports mislabelled as captive-bred.⁹²⁵

DRIVES OF ILLEGAL TRADE

International demand: International demand significantly fuels India’s wildlife trade, particularly for species like tigers, pangolins, Indian star tortoises, and red sandalwood sourced from Indian biodiversity hotspots. Primary markets include East Asia (China, Vietnam for traditional medicine), Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia for pets and scales), and the Middle East/Europe for luxury goods like ivory traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) remains the largest driver for tiger bones, rhino horns, and pangolin scales ⁹²⁶ Tiger parts (bones, skins) and rhino horns target Chinese/Vietnamese medicinal markets despite global declines since 2011. Pangolin scales supply similar regions; Indian star tortoises head to pet trades in Singapore/Malaysia via Mumbai/Chennai airports. Driving Factors

Species	Main demand region	Product/uses	Legal status
Tiger / rhino	China, Vietnam	Medicine (bones, horns skin)	Schedule I (highest protection)
Pangolin	China, Vietnam	Scales (medicine), meat	Schedule I
Star Tortoise	Thailand, Singapore	Exotic pets trade	Schedule 4 (CITES aligned)

⁹²³ Wildlife (protection) Act of 1972.
⁹²⁴ tradeworldnews.com

⁹²⁵ CITES report urges Indian to halt wildlife imports pending stronger checks
⁹²⁶ India.mongabay.com (why is indian a major hub for wildlife trafficking)

Red Sandalwood	China, middle East	Luxury furniture	Schedule 1
Elephant	China Singapore	Ivory, live capture	Schedule 1

THE EXOTIC PET MARKET

The term "wildlife trade" describes the sale of goods made from non-domesticated plants or animals that are often taken from or cultivated in controlled environments. It might entail the trafficking of either live or dead individuals, tissues like flesh, bones, or skins, or other goods. Similar to narcotics and gun trafficking, the illegal wildlife trade is a major illegal economic activity that is widely practiced. Since wildlife trading may pose a serious threat to the survival of vertebrate species, it is a serious conservation issue that is negatively affecting numerous animal species and their populations.

A rising trend in 2025-2026 involves the smuggling of exotic reptiles and birds, often through the "Leesh" and "Zoonotic" corridors. Global illicit trade, valued at up to \$35 billion annually, thrives on pet trade (exotics like macaws entering via India), meat, and emerging demands like European eels replacing ivory. India's role as source/transit amplifies this, with Northeast borders and airports as key exit points.

ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Using the most effective tool available, wildlife habitat management seeks to balance the demands of both people and animals. Managing wildlife might involve controlling pests, protecting habitat, and managing games.³¹ Multidisciplinary wildlife management protects endangered and non-threatened agricultural animals and game species, as well as endangered species and subspecies and their environments. Ecological values including habitat capabilities transit, ecosystem conservation and regulation, reforestation, predator control, reintroducing extinct species, capturing and relocating abundant animals,

and managing "wanted" or "unwanted" species are all taken into consideration while managing wildlife.

In order to preserve biodiversity at suitable levels, wildlife managers use the broad phrase "wildlife management." Utilizing and safeguarding animal populations and habitats is the art and science of wildlife management. The procedure for One aspect of wildlife management is our comprehension and awareness of the population and patterns of animals.

- 2.Elements that will affect populations of animals.
3. How different animal species interact
4. The Effects of People
5. How animals and its habitat are impacted by the surrounding environment.

THE NEED OF MANAGING WILDLIFE

As stated, the goal of wildlife management is to balance the demands of animals. Therefore, it is crucial to manage wildlife in order to prevent its spread and other issues that may arise in its natural environment.

1. Balance of Nature
2. Tourism
3. Make study easy
4. Cultural Asset
5. 5. Sustainable Development

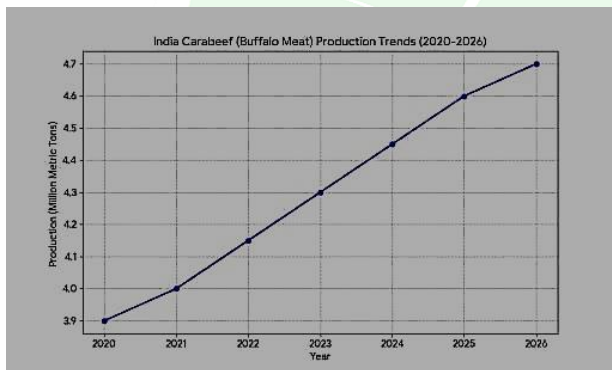
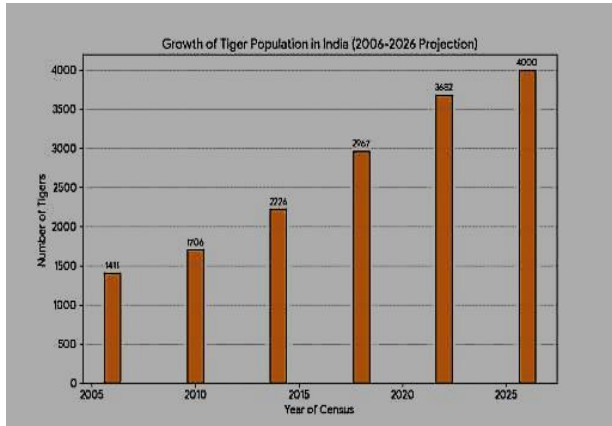
Livestock and Meat Production (2026 Projections)

India remains the world's largest producer of milk and a leading exporter of carabeef (buffalo meat).

Production Volume: 2026 beef production is forecast at 4.7 MMT, a 1% increase from 2025.

Livestock Inventory: The 21st Livestock Census (2024-2026) indicates a stable bovine population of approximately 307.5 million head.

Economic Impact: The sector provides livelihoods to over 20 million people, acting as a safety net for landless farmers.



The illicit traffic in animals and their products has been booming in the market and has become a worldwide threat. Prohibit those who engage in illegal wildlife trafficking. Despite several attempts to stop the death of an increasing number of animals, a few of them are in danger of going extinct. Even though there have been several efforts to increase the number of endangered animal species, their numbers have also begun to drop. Many people worldwide continue to trade wildlife and its products despite being aware that the nations have laws and penalties, which has grown to be a serious issue. Because of this issue, these animals and their products have a tremendous demand in global marketplaces, where individuals may earn a sizable sum of money, creating chances for people to sell and slaughter wild animals. The legal wildlife trade is the practice of

exchanging animals for the purpose of conserving and repopulating species, such as in zoos and national parks.

SOME STEPS IN THE DIRECTION OF CONSERVATION OF WILDLIFE COULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

1. surveying and collecting all wildlife information, in particular, their number and growth.
2. Habitat protection through forest protection.
3. To fix the areas of their natural habitat.
4. To protect wildlife against pollution and natural hazards.
5. To impose comprehensive restrictions on wildlife hunting and capture.
6. To impose restrictions on the export and import of wildlife products and to tax severely penalties on those who engage in such activity.

Conclusion

The analytical study reveals that while India has made monumental strides in increasing the populations of its flagship species (Tigers, Lions, and Rhinos), the pressure from the illegal wildlife trade remains a persistent threat to biodiversity. Simultaneously, the animal production sector is evolving toward higher efficiency and better disease control, contributing to national food security

Not only is the right to life on Earth guaranteed to humans, but it also extends to animals and other species. If a species is extinct, whether due to natural causes or human activity, it implies it will never be seen again. Death is a "biological fact." since no species has survived for more than a few million years without evolving into something new or completely becoming extinct. River damming, forest cutting for human use, hunting, and other activities have all had an influence on wildlife and habitat loss, putting numerous species in risk of extinction.

India's wildlife trade regime, anchored in WPA and CITES, has curbed declines (tigers up to 3,682 in 2022), but illegal production and trade



persist amid enforcement lacunae. Balancing conservation with livelihoods demands integrated policies—stricter exotic controls, community incentives, and tech-driven vigilance—to safeguard biodiversity for future generations. Sustained reforms can transform India from trafficking hub to global model

