

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 19-02-2023

'EXERCISE - VAYU SHAKTI-24'



IAF conducts 'EXERCISE - VAYU SHAKTI-24' in Rajasthan.

'EXERCISE - VAYU SHAKTI-24'

In keeping with this year's theme of the Exercise, '**Lightning Strike from the Sky**', over 120 aircraft displayed the IAF's offensive capabilities by day as well as by night.

Fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force including the **Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas and Hawk** attacked and destroyed simulated enemy targets on ground and in the air with deadly precision.

These attacks were delivered in multiple modes and directions, employing a variety of Precision Guided Munitions as well as conventional bombs and rockets.

Upholding IAF's firm commitment to '**AtmaNirbhar Bharat**', the indigenously built **Tejas aircraft** showcased its swing-role capability and destroyed an aerial target with a missile, followed by the engagement of a ground target with bombs.

Keeping up with the technological advancements in combat domain and the lessons learnt from recent conflicts, the IAF also displayed a **long-range unmanned drone**, which destroyed a simulated enemy radar site, with pinpoint accuracy.



An IAF Rafale also successfully engaged an aerial target with a beyond visual range air-to-air missile.

Combat support operations by transport aircraft included a Containerised Delivery System drop by a C-17 heavy-lift aircraft and an assault landing by a C-130J carrying IAF Special Forces, Garuds.

The Apache attack helicopter demonstrated its firepower in this event for the first time, by engaging targets with Air to Ground guided missiles, while Mi-17 helicopters engaged ground targets with rockets.

Joint operations included the IAF and Indian Army's weaponized version of the Advanced **Light Helicopters Mk-IV** devastating simulated enemy targets using their rockets and swivel guns. As another first, IAF Chinook helicopters demonstrated rapid deployment of combat assets by airlifting the **Indian Army's M-777 Ultra-Light** Howitzers in an underslung mode enabling prompt destruction of simulated enemy targets on ground.

Mi-17 helicopters carried out an 'Urban Intervention' demonstrating their prowess in anti-terror/insurgency operations aimed at clearing hideouts of inimical elements.

The indigenous Air Defence Systems, **Akash and SAMAR missile systems** were also showcased, destroying multiple aerial targets.

Night events displayed for the first time the capabilities of indigenous Light Combat Helicopter '**Prachand**' wherein it neutralised designated target with rockets.

This was followed by a Jaguar and **Su-30 MKI** dropping heavy calibre and area weapons at night showcasing the strategic bombing capability of the IAF.

Remotely Piloted Aircraft carried out the bomb damage assessment of all targets that was live streamed to the operations centre and to the audience.

The event also included a free fall drop by the Akashganga team and flare dispensing by C-130J by night.

During the display, approximately 50 tonnes of ordnance was dropped in a short span of two hours over an area of two square km. The event truly showcased IAF's offensive lethality and precision targeting capability.



Akash Missile

Developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, produced by Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL).

Short-range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM).

Engages four aerial targets simultaneously at a **range of 25 km from a single firing unit.**

Capable of targeting multiple threats concurrently in group or autonomous modes.

Equipped to counter enemy jamming and evasion tactics.

Effective **range of 4.5 km to 25 km**, with an altitude range of 100 meters to 20 km.

Length: 5,870 mm; Diameter: 350 mm; Weight: 710 kg.

SAMAR missile systems

Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) is a short-range air-defence system. It has been developed by a unit under the IAF's Maintenance Command.

The system is credited with a maximum **range of 10–12 km** and is used against low-flying aerial targets. It can engage aerial threats with missiles operating at a speed range of 2 to 2.5 Mach.

The **SAMAR-1 system uses the IAF's existing inventory** of shelf-life-expired Russian Vympel R-73E infrared-guided air-to-air missiles (AAMs) for the surface-to-air role.

The system features a twin-turret launch platform capable of launching two missiles in single and salvo modes, depending on the threat scenario.

Each missile launcher had an **electro-optic system visible.**

AMENDMENT TO WPA 1972

19th February, 2024 Environment



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Courtesy: <https://www.livelaw.in/news-updates/wildlife-protection-amendment-bill-2022-elephants-ownership-parliament-216161>

Context: Kerala wants the Centre to amend the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) of 1972 due to increasing human-animal conflict, particularly involving wild boars and elephants.

Details

- Kerala is advocating for amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, primarily focusing on two key aspects: the amendment of Section 11 regarding hunting permissions and the classification of wild boars as vermin.

Amendment to Section 11 (1)(A)

- The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, in Section 11(1)(A), grants the **Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) the authority to permit the hunting or killing of specified wild animals** if they are deemed dangerous to human life or are disabled or diseased beyond recovery.
- **Kerala is seeking an amendment to transfer these powers from the CWLW to the Chief Conservators of Forests (CCF).** This change is

intended to streamline the decision-making process, allowing more localized authorities (CCFs) to address wildlife threats promptly

Declaration of Wild Boar as Vermin

- **Kerala is urging the Centre to declare wild boars as vermin under Section 62 of the Wildlife Protection Act.** According to this section, the Union Government can categorize any wild animal in Schedule II as vermin for a specific period and in a designated area.
- **Once classified as vermin, wild boars lose their protection from hunting,** enabling the state and citizens to cull the population to mitigate threats to life and livelihood, particularly in the agriculture sector.

Reasons for the Amendments

- **Human-Animal Conflict:** Kerala has been experiencing an increase in human-animal conflicts, with attacks on humans and damage to crops becoming more prevalent.
- **Agricultural Impact:** Wild boars, in particular, are causing significant damage to farmland, leading to economic losses for farmers.
- **Inefficiency of Previous Measures:** Previous attempts to address the wild boar issue, such as empowering local bodies to deploy licensed shooters, were not effective due to a lack of shooters in villages and bureaucratic delays in involving the forest department after each killing.

Human-Wildlife Conflict

Root Causes

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation: Human activities like deforestation, urbanization, and infrastructure development encroach on animal habitats, forcing them to compete for resources with humans or venture into human settlements. This shrinking space and resource scarcity fuel conflict.

Resource Competition: Growing human populations inevitably lead to increased demand for resources like water, food, and space. This competition directly impacts wildlife, leading to conflict when humans and animals vie for the same resources.

Human-Wildlife Interactions: Increased human presence in natural areas, including activities like tourism, poaching, and livestock grazing, can disrupt



animal behaviour and provoke negative interactions. Unsustainable practices can further exacerbate conflict.

Climate Change: Changing weather patterns and extreme weather events disrupt ecosystems, alter animal behaviour, and push species into unfamiliar territories, potentially increasing their interactions with humans and leading to conflict.

Consequences

Human Casualties and Injuries: Attacks by wild animals can cause serious injuries and fatalities, impacting individual lives and communities. Fear and psychological trauma can also be significant consequences.

Livestock Depredation: Wildlife predation on livestock can inflict significant economic losses on farmers and herders, impacting livelihoods and food security.

Crop Damage: Animals feeding on crops can cause substantial economic losses for farmers, jeopardizing their income and food production.

Animal Population Decline: Retaliatory killings, poaching, and habitat loss can threaten animal populations, pushing some species towards endangerment and disrupting ecosystem balance.

Potential Solutions

Habitat Conservation and Restoration: Protecting and restoring critical habitats is crucial for providing animals with enough space and resources, reducing pressure on human settlements and promoting coexistence.

Wildlife Corridors: Creating and maintaining corridors that connect fragmented habitats allows animals to move freely and access resources, minimizing conflict with humans and maintaining healthy populations.

Human-Wildlife Conflict Management: Implementing measures like deterrents (fences, alarms), community outreach programs, compensation schemes, and early warning systems can help mitigate conflict, promote coexistence, and foster mutual understanding.

Sustainable Land Use Practices: Adopting sustainable agricultural and forestry practices like crop diversification, buffer zones, and wildlife-friendly fencing can minimize resource competition and reduce negative impacts on wildlife.



Research and Education: Understanding animal behaviour, migration patterns, and resource needs through research can inform effective conflict management strategies and promote proactive solutions.

Public Awareness: Raising public awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation, responsible behaviour in natural areas, and the complex causes of HWC can foster empathy, support for coexistence initiatives, and encourage responsible actions.

Wildlife Protection Act of 1972

India is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, with many endemic and endangered species. However, due to various factors such as habitat loss, poaching, human-wildlife conflict, and climate change, many of these species are facing the threat of extinction.

To protect and conserve the wildlife of the country, the Indian Parliament enacted the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, which is one of the most comprehensive and progressive legislations in the world.

The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 provides for the conservation, protection and management of wild animals, plants and their habitats. It also regulates the trade and hunting of wildlife and establishes various authorities and bodies to implement and enforce the provisions of the act. The act has been amended several times to incorporate new provisions and strengthen the existing ones.

Main objectives

The Act **prohibits the hunting of most wild animals without specific permits.** Exceptions are allowed in certain situations, such as when an animal is deemed dangerous to human life or is disabled or diseased beyond recovery. These exceptions are subject to the issuance of permits by designated authorities.

The Act **empowers the government to establish wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and other protected areas.** These areas serve as crucial habitats for diverse wildlife species, providing them with a secure environment for breeding, feeding, and overall conservation.

The Act **categorizes animals and plants into different schedules based on their conservation status.** Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II contain species



that receive the highest level of protection, making hunting or trade in these species illegal without special permits. The schedules are periodically updated to reflect changes in the conservation status of species.

The Act **regulates the trade and commerce of wildlife and their products**. It prohibits the trade of trophies, animal articles, and uncured trophies without proper authorization. This measure aims to curb illegal wildlife trade and ensure that the exploitation of wildlife resources is sustainable.

The Act **establishes authorities at different levels, including the National Board for Wildlife and State Boards for Wildlife**. These institutions play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the Act, formulating policies for wildlife conservation, and advising the government on matters related to wildlife protection.

Salient Features of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972

Categorization of Species

The Act **classifies species into six schedules based on their conservation status**.

Schedule I and II: These include the most endangered species like tigers, elephants, rhinos, lions, etc. Hunting or trading these species is strictly prohibited.

Schedule III and IV: Species not necessarily endangered but still requiring protection, such as deer, monkeys, crocodiles, etc. Hunting them is allowed with a license.

Schedule V: Lists vermin animals like crows and rats that can be hunted without a license.

Schedule VI: Covers protected plants like orchids and sandalwood, requiring permission for cultivation or collection.

Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2022

The number of schedules listing protected species has been reduced from six to four.

Schedule I contains animals with the highest protection level.

Schedule II includes animals with a lesser degree of protection.



Establishment of Authorities

Various authorities and bodies are established to enforce and implement the Act.

National Board for Wildlife (NBWL): Headed by the Prime Minister, it formulates policies and advises the government on wildlife conservation.

Wildlife Advisory Board (WAB): Headed by the Chief Minister in each state, it plays a role in advising the state government on wildlife conservation matters.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB): A statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, it focuses on controlling wildlife crimes.

Central Zoo Authority (CZA): Regulates and monitors zoos in India to ensure the well-being of captive animals.

Regulation of Trade and Hunting: The Act regulates the trade and hunting of wildlife through the issuance of licenses and permits for specific purposes, such as scientific research, education, and captive breeding. It strictly prohibits the trade or possession of any animal article or trophy derived from protected species. Penalties are prescribed for violations, ranging from imprisonment to fines.

Challenges and Gaps

Financial and Manpower Constraints: Adequate funds and manpower are essential for effective wildlife management and protection. A lack of resources can hinder conservation efforts and enforcement.

Coordination and Cooperation: Coordination among various stakeholders involved in wildlife conservation, including government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, is crucial. Lack of cooperation can lead to inefficiencies and gaps in conservation activities.

Scientific Data and Monitoring: The availability of scientific data and robust monitoring systems is vital for assessing wildlife status and trends. Insufficient data can impede informed decision-making in conservation efforts.

Public Participation and Awareness: Involving the public in wildlife conservation and raising awareness about the importance of protecting wildlife



is essential. A lack of awareness can result in a lack of public support for conservation initiatives.

Conflict Between Development and Conservation: Balancing development objectives with conservation needs is a persistent challenge. Development projects may sometimes conflict with wildlife conservation goals.

Emerging Threats: Climate change, invasive species, diseases, and other emerging threats pose challenges to wildlife conservation efforts. Adaptation strategies are necessary to address these evolving challenges.

Way Forward

Increase Resources: Allocating more financial and human resources to wildlife conservation. This includes funding for conservation projects, research, and personnel training.

Enhance Coordination: Strengthening inter-agency coordination and collaboration at various levels. Facilitating cooperation between government bodies, NGOs, and local communities.

Improve Research and Monitoring: Investing in scientific research and monitoring capabilities for a better understanding of wildlife status and trends. Implementing technology-driven solutions for effective monitoring.

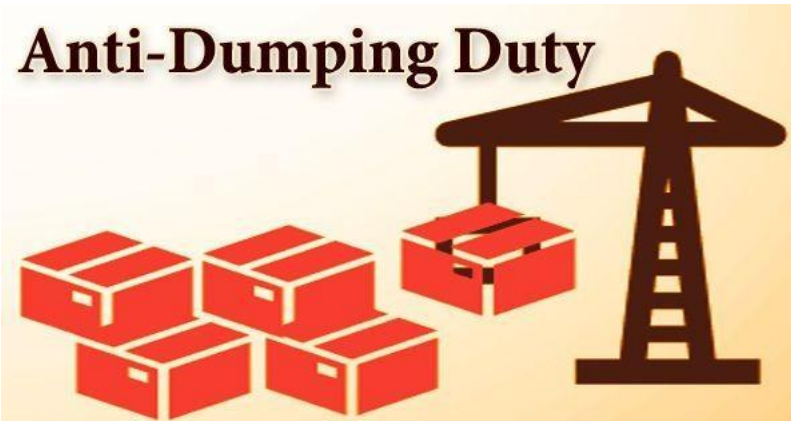
Balance Development and Conservation: Adopting participatory planning and decision-making processes that consider both development and conservation objectives. Ensuring that development projects adhere to sustainable practices.

Adopt Adaptive Management: Developing adaptive management strategies to address emerging threats and changing conservation needs. Incorporating flexibility in conservation plans to respond to new challenges.

The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 is a cornerstone of wildlife conservation in India, providing a legal framework for protection and management. While it has been instrumental in various successful conservation projects, addressing ongoing challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving financial support, coordination, research, public engagement, and adaptive management. By implementing measures to overcome these challenges, India can continue to preserve its rich wildlife heritage for future generations.

ANTI DUMPING DUTY

19th February, 2024 Economy



India has initiated an anti-dumping probe into imports of certain solar glass from China and Vietnam, following a complaint by domestic players.

Dumping

- Dumping is the **practice of selling goods in a foreign market at a price lower than what is charged in the domestic market or below the cost of production.**
- This can harm domestic producers in the importing country by undercutting their prices and making it difficult for them to compete.

Implications

Impact on Domestic Industries:

- Dumping can harm domestic industries by undercutting their prices and reducing their market share.
- This can lead to lower profits, reduced production, and potential job losses.

Consumer Impact:

- While dumping may benefit consumers in the short term by offering lower prices, it can lead to the weakening or elimination of domestic industries in the long term.
- This reduction in competition can potentially result in higher prices for consumers.

Impact on Exporting Country:



- Dumping can lead to overproduction and a reliance on export markets, which can be risky if those markets become less profitable or are subject to trade barriers.

Trade Relations:

- Dumping can strain trade relations between countries, leading to retaliatory trade barriers or anti-dumping measures.

Global Trade Environment:

- It can distort the global trade environment by encouraging unfair competition and discouraging sustainable trade practices.

Legal Challenges:

- Legal challenges can arise, with importing countries imposing anti-dumping duties to offset the effects of dumping, potentially leading to disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) or through bilateral trade agreements.

Measures taken to combat Dumping

Anti-Dumping Duties:

- Countries can impose anti-dumping duties on imported goods that are being dumped in their market.
- These duties are designed to offset the price advantage gained through dumping and make the imported goods less competitive.

Anti-Dumping Investigations:

- Governments can initiate investigations to determine if dumping is occurring and if it is causing injury to domestic industries.
- If dumping is found to be taking place, anti-dumping measures can be imposed.

WTO Rules:

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) has established rules governing the use of anti-dumping measures.
- These rules aim to ensure that anti-dumping measures are applied fairly and transparently and do not unnecessarily restrict trade.

Trade Remedies Allowed By WTO	
<p>Anti-dumping duty If a company exports a product at a price lower than the price it normally charges in its home market, it is said to be “dumping” the product. Govts have to establish that dumping is causing material or genuine injury to domestic industry</p> <p>Countervailing duty If</p>	<p>domestic producers are hurt by imports of subsidised products, countervailing duty can be imposed</p> <p>Safeguard action It allows a country to temporarily restrict imports of a product if its domestic industry is injured or threatened with injury due to an import “surge”</p>

Negotiations and Consultations:

- Countries can engage in negotiations and consultations to address dumping issues bilaterally or through international forums like the WTO.
- This can help resolve disputes and find mutually acceptable solutions.

Export Restraints:

- Exporting countries can voluntarily restrain their exports or agree to limit their exports to avoid the imposition of anti-dumping measures by importing countries.

Monitoring and Surveillance:

- Governments can establish monitoring and surveillance mechanisms to track and analyze trade patterns and detect potential dumping activities.

Capacity Building:

- Countries can build the capacity of their industries to compete more effectively in the global market, reducing the incentive for other countries to dump goods in their market.

Public Awareness and Education:

- Public awareness campaigns and educational programs can help raise awareness about the impacts of dumping and the importance of fair trade practices.



Legal Action:

- In cases where dumping practices violate domestic or international trade laws, legal action can be taken to address the issue through the appropriate legal channels.

WTO'S ANTI-DUMPING MEASURES

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has established specific rules regarding anti-dumping measures through the **Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (the Anti-Dumping Agreement)**. Here are some key provisions:

- **Definition of Dumping:** The agreement defines dumping as the export of goods
- by a country at a price lower than the normal value of the goods in the exporting country's domestic market.
- **Calculation of Dumping Margin:** The agreement provides guidelines for calculating the margin of dumping, which is the difference between the export price and the normal value of the goods.
- **Evidence of Injury:** Before imposing anti-dumping measures, importing countries must demonstrate that the dumped imports are causing or threatening to cause material injury to a domestic industry.
- **Imposition of Duties:** If dumping is established and injury is demonstrated, importing countries can impose anti-dumping duties on the dumped imports. These duties should not exceed the margin of dumping.
- **Duration of Measures:** Anti-dumping duties are typically imposed for a period of five years, but they can be extended if the authorities determine that the dumping is likely to continue and continue to harm the domestic industry.
- **Review and Sunset Reviews:** The agreement allows for periodic reviews of anti-dumping measures to assess their continued need and effectiveness. Sunset reviews are conducted before the expiry of measures to determine if they should be extended.



- **Non-Discrimination:** The agreement prohibits the use of anti-dumping measures in a way that discriminates between trading partners or provides protection for domestic industries that is greater than necessary.
- **Transparency and Due Process:** The agreement requires that anti-dumping investigations be conducted in a transparent manner, with opportunities for all interested parties to present evidence and arguments. It also provides for the right of appeal against anti-dumping decisions.

These rules are intended to ensure that anti-dumping measures are applied in a fair and transparent manner, balancing the interests of domestic industries with the principles of free and fair trade.

Who can file a complaint against dumping activities in India?

The Directorate of **Anti-Dumping** and Allied Duties (DGAD) can take a **suo moto cognizance** to impose anti-dumping duty on an importer when it is satisfied that a substantial and grave injury is caused to a domestic industry.

- A complaint can be filed by the domestic industry engaged in dumped goods. 'Domestic industry' includes the manufacturers who constitute a majority portion of the entire domestic industry of dumped goods. The application for anti-dumping duty must be supported by producers who collectively manufacture at least 50% of total production. The investigation process must also be supported by manufactures constituting 25% of total domestic production.

Anti-Dumping Duty in India

- Anti-dumping duty is a measure imposed by a country's government on imports from another country which exports its goods at a lower price as compared to the market value in its own domestic market. Anti-dumping duty is levied to protect the importing country's domestic market from unfair trade practices used by exporters to disrupt the domestic market and creating a monopoly by producing similar products at very low prices.
- The Customs Tariff Act, 1975 lays down the circumstances in which the Central Government can impose anti-dumping duties on dumped goods in



Indian domestic market. The anti-dumping rules included by the 1995 amendment lays down provisions for identification, assessment and collection of anti-dumping duty from the importer.

- The anti-dumping laws state that the Indian government may impose anti-dumping duty after it conducts the inquiry and determines normal value, export value and the margin between two. The government has the power to make anti-dumping rules to identify goods that are liable for levying anti-dumping duty.
- In case any material or substantial injury is caused to the domestic industry, the Indian government has the power to levy other duty in addition to anti-dumping duty. The quantum of damage is analysed by the volume of goods dumped, their consumption and the effect they have on the domestic market.
- Anti-dumping duty is applicable only for a period of 5 years and its applicability ceases if the duty is not reviewed and renewed.

What is the procedure of levying Anti-dumping Duty in India?

1. An application is filed by the domestic industry or DGAD on its own cognizance.
2. The proceedings begin and responses are invited from 50% domestic producers constituting the total domestic market.
3. Provisional anti-dumping duty is levied on the basis of preliminary findings.
4. Final findings are drawn on the basis of inspection of domestic industry and importers.
5. The final anti-dumping duty is levied on the exporting company.

The entire investigation process has to be concluded within 12 months from the date of filing the application. Anti-dumping rules also state that this period may be extended by the period of 6 months, limiting the time period to 18 months.

An application for appeal can be filed against the final decision can be filed with the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal along with Rs. 15,000 within 90 days of final order.



Disinflation

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor recently said recurring food price shocks and renewed flash points on the geo-political front pose a challenge to the ongoing disinflation process.

About Disinflation

Disinflation is a decrease in inflation rates.

In simple terms, a decline in the rate of increase in the general price level of goods and services in the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country over time is called disinflation.

Unlike inflation and deflation, which refer to the direction of prices, disinflation refers to the rate of change in the rate of inflation.

Disinflation is not considered problematic because prices do not actually drop, and disinflation does not usually signal the onset of a slowing economy.

A healthy amount of disinflation is necessary since it represents economic contraction and prevents the economy from overheating.

Disinflation is considered the opposite of reflation, which occurs when a government stimulates an economy by increasing the money supply.

Causes of Disinflation:

Many reasons can cause disinflation in an economy.

If a central bank wants to enforce a tighter monetary policy and the government starts selling off some of its assets, the supply of money in the economy could be limited, causing a disinflationary effect.

Similarly, disinflation can also be caused by a contraction in the business cycle of recession. For instance, companies may choose not to raise prices to gain more significant market share, leading to disinflation.

Central Asian Flyway

A UN convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS) adopted India's initiative for Central Asian Flyway (CAF) and agreed for listing 14 additional migratory species from across the globe for conservation in the CMS appendices.



About Central Asian Flyway

It covers a large continental area of Eurasia between the Arctic and Indian Oceans and the associated island chains.

A flyway is a geographical region within which a single or group of migratory species completes its annual cycle — breeding, moulting, staging and non-breeding.

There are nine flyways in the world.

Geographically the flyway region covers 30 countries of North, Central and South Asia and Trans-Caucasus.

There is an overlap between the CAF and the area of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), which was concluded in 1995, at The Hague, the Netherlands.

Sixteen out of the thirty countries encompassed by the CAF are located in the AEWA Agreement Area.

CAF migration routes include the steppes and cold deserts of Central Eurasia, and much of the Himalayan chain, where unique, high-altitude migrations such as those of the Bar-headed Goose, *Anser indicus*, take place.

India's Initiative: The 14 species which will be listed in CMS appendices include

Eurasian Lynx, Peruvian Pelican, Pallas's Cat, Guanaco, Laulao Catfish, Balkan Lynx, Lahille's Bottlenose Dolphin, Harbour Porpoise, Magellanic Plover, Bearded Vulture, Blackchin Guitarfish, Bull Ray, Lusitanian Cownose Ray and Gilded Catfish.

The adopted initiative includes the establishment of a coordinating unit in India with financial support from the Indian Government.