

**SAVING WILDLIFE**

# Soon, ₹1 cr fine for killing tiger

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**NEW DELHI:** Wildlife poachers can soon be jailed for a minimum of seven years and fined at least ₹30 lakh for killing endangered species, and the country will have two bodies to regulate international wildlife trade.

The law ministry on Tuesday approved over 100 amendments in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, bringing it in tune with wildlife protection laws across the world by including regulation of species not native to India, a requirement under a global convention on wildlife.

Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said the bill, which strengthens the powers of forest and enforcement agencies, will be introduced in the winter session of Parliament after getting the cabinet's approval.

One of the biggest changes in the law is constitution of two bodies — scientific and management — to implement its provisions and regulate trade.

The management authority will be responsible for issuance of permits for trade of scheduled species on advice of the scientific body. The two bodies will also be to enlist the exotic species found in India, which are not covered by global wildlife convention, and ways to regulate them. "Protecting the country's indigenous species would be another role of the authority," an official said.

The proposed law for the first time speaks of using other laws such as Forest Rights Act, 2006, and Biological Diversity Act, 2003, for conservation of wildlife habitats. "It has been done to make wildlife laws compatible with each other," the official said.



- The amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, will bring it in tune with wildlife protection laws across the world by including regulation of species not native to India, a requirement under a global convention on wildlife.
- The law will constitute two bodies to implement its provisions and regulate trade.
- It speaks of using other laws to conserve wildlife habitats.

To provide the highest degree of legal protection to the most vulnerable animals against poaching, the amendments have put tigers, whose population is said to be less than 1,411, in Category 1. Other endangered animals in this category include lions, elephants, rhinos, crocodiles and antelopes.

Killing an animal in Category 1 could attract a minimum jail term of five years and maximum of seven. The fine prescribed ranges from ₹5 lakh to ₹1 crore.

For species under Category 2, including endangered birds, the jail term suggested is between three to five years and fine of up to ₹3 lakh.

Teasing an animal will also be an offence.