

Kerala Seeks Amendment to Wildlife Act to Tackle Rising Animal Attacks

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Wildlife Conflict in Kerala Latest News

- Kerala has requested the Centre to amend the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, seeking permission to kill wild animals that enter human habitats and threaten lives or property.

The Wildlife Conflict Crisis in Kerala

- Kerala is facing a surge in wildlife attacks, with 273 out of 941 village local bodies identified as conflict hotspots.

Problematic Species

- Key animals involved include tiger, leopard, elephant, bison, wild boar, bonnet macaque, and peafowl.
- While bonnet macaques and peafowls are not dangerous to humans, their crop raids have forced farmers to abandon large areas of farmland.

Human Casualties

- Between 2016-17 and January 2025, wildlife attacks have claimed 919 lives and injured 8,967 people, highlighting the urgency of the issue.

Causes of Rising Human-Wildlife Conflict in Kerala

- **Habitat Degradation and Displacement**
 - Declining quality of forest habitats is forcing wild animals to move into human settlements in search of food and space.
- **Population Imbalance**
 - A surge in populations of wild pigs and monkey species has significantly increased incidents of crop raiding and property damage.
- **Human Activities Near Forests**
 - Grazing of domestic cattle in forest areas and changes in cropping patterns near forest fringes are contributing to increased encounters.
- **Ecological Imbalance**
 - Regional fluctuations in wildlife populations have disturbed the natural balance, intensifying conflicts between humans and animals.

Why Kerala Seeks Amendment to the Wildlife Act

- **Legal Hurdles in Emergency Response**
 - Current laws require the state to exhaust all options—capture, tranquilisation, or relocation—before considering the **killing of Schedule I protected animals**, delaying timely action in emergencies.
 - Even when animals are captured, they cannot be kept in confinement, limiting the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Multiple Regulatory Layers**
 - Apart from the Wildlife Act, Kerala must adhere to guidelines from the Tiger Conservation Authority and Project Elephant Scheme, further complicating decision-making during conflicts.
- **Limited Powers of Local Authorities**
 - Although district collectors can order removal of public nuisances, court rulings restrict the use of these powers for dealing with wild animals, reducing the state's ability to act swiftly.

Kerala Government's Stand on Culling Wild Animals

- The state government has urged the Centre to amend the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, to permit the killing of all man-eating wild animals.

Not Indiscriminate, But Controlled Culling

- The state is seeking limited, regulated culling—restricted by region, season, and threat level—to protect lives and agriculture, not blanket permissions.

Failure of Preventive Measures

- Fencing and other preventive efforts have failed to deter wild animal intrusions into human habitats.

Ineffective Wild Boar Control

- The current wild boar control system involving licensed shooters is bogged down by impractical rules, such as checking for pregnancy before shooting, rendering it ineffective.

Need for Wildlife Population Control

- The govt emphasized that unchecked growth of certain wildlife populations is escalating threats to both human life and livelihoods.

Changing the Legal Status of Problematic Wildlife

• Wild Boars as Vermin

- Kerala seeks to classify wild boars as vermin under Section 62 of the Wildlife Protection Act for a specific period to allow controlled culling.
 - This section empowers the Central Government to declare any wild animal specified in Schedule II to be vermin for a specific area and period.
 - Once declared vermin, the animal is deemed not to be included in Schedule II for that area and period, effectively removing its protection from hunting.
 - **Schedule II** of the act – Trade is generally prohibited, but they can be hunted under certain circumstances, such as a threat to human life.

• Revisiting Bonnet Macaque's Protection Status

- The state wants the bonnet macaque removed from Schedule I of the Act.
 - **Schedule I of the Act** lists species that receive the highest level of protection, with severe penalties for any violation.
 - These are generally endangered species, and hunting them is prohibited except in cases of direct threat to human life.
- Its inclusion in 2022 restricts the chief wildlife warden from taking immediate action against the species despite growing conflicts.
- Before 2022, wardens could capture and relocate nuisance monkeys.
- The revised protection status now hampers timely intervention in human-wildlife conflict cases involving bonnet macaques.

Wildlife Conflict in Kerala FAQs

Q1. Why is Kerala seeking changes to the Wildlife Act?

Ans. To enable swift action against wild animals threatening human life and property in inhabited areas.

Q2. Which animals are causing the most conflict in Kerala?

Ans. Tigers, leopards, elephants, wild boars, bonnet macaques, and peafowls frequently invade human spaces.

Q3. How many people have been affected by wildlife attacks?

Ans. Between 2016–2025, 919 killed and 8,967 injured due to wildlife attacks in Kerala.

Q4. Why is the current law seen as inadequate?

Ans. It delays emergency response due to strict conditions on capturing or killing protected animals.

Q5. What specific legal changes is Kerala demanding?

Ans. Reclassifying wild boars as vermin and removing bonnet macaques from Schedule I protection.

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