

# Ecuador gives Legal Rights to Wild Animals

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**In news-** Ecuador, a South American country has become the first country in the world to give legal rights to wild animals.

## Key updates-

- The decision was taken by the country's highest court when it was hearing a case for Estrellita, a woolly monkey taken from the wild when she was one-month-old and kept as a pet.
- She later died a month after it was moved to the zoo.
- The court noted that "wild species and their individuals have the right not to be hunted, fished, captured, collected, extracted, kept, retained, trafficked, traded or exchanged," and that these creatures have individual value not related to their usefulness to humans.

## About Ecuador-

- Ecuador, on South America's west coast, is **named after the Equator**, the imaginary line around the Earth that splits the country in two.
- Most of the country is in the Southern Hemisphere.
- It is bordered by Colombia and Peru and the Andes Mountains form the backbone of the country.
- **Cotopaxi in the Andes is the highest active volcano in the world.**



- **Quito, the capital, is known for its largely intact Spanish colonial center,** with decorated 16th- and 17th-century palaces and religious sites, like the ornate Compañía de Jesús Church.
- **Ecuador has many geographical zones, including Andean peaks, tropical rainforests** and 1,000km (600 miles) off the coast – the **volcanic Galapagos Islands**, home to the animals and birds whose evolutionary adaptations shaped Charles Darwin's theories.

### **Rivers as legal persons-**

- **Ecuador was the first country to give legal status to its one river.**
- Bangladesh was the first country **to grant all its rivers the same legal status as humans.**
- **New Zealand in 2017 granted specific river legal rights.**
- In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court had ruled that the **Indian rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the Gangotri and Yamunotri glaciers, as well as other related natural elements are "legal persons"** with all corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person.
- The rights of rivers in that sense would mean that the ecological causes and conditions making up the natural habitat are to be protected to maintain a river's identity and integrity.

**Further**

**reading:**

<https://journalsofindia.com/right-of-passage-for-animals/>