

Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2019

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The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change notified guidelines for implementing the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2019. The Rules constitute various bodies for the conservation of wetlands and define their powers and functions

Features of the guidelines

- **Nodal authority:** As per the Wetlands Rules, the Wetlands Authority within a state is the nodal authority for all wetland-specific authorities in a state/UT.
- **Functions of the authority:**
 1. Preparing a list of all wetlands in the state/UT and recommending wetlands for regulation under the Rules
 2. Developing a comprehensive list of activities to be regulated and permitted within the notified wetlands, and
 3. Issuing necessary directions for the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands to the respective implementing agencies
- **Prohibited activities:** as per the guidelines following activities are prohibited on wetlands. These include:
 1. Setting up any industry and expansion of existing industries
 2. Dumping solid waste or discharge of untreated wastes and effluents from industries and any human settlements, and
 3. Encroachment or conversion for non-wetlands uses.

- **Integrated Management Plan:** The guidelines recommend the state/UT administration to prepare a plan for the management of each notified wetland. The plan refers to a document which:
 1. Describes strategies and actions for use of the wetland
 2. Gives monitoring requirements for detecting changes in the ecological character of the wetland, and
 3. Ensures compliance with regulatory frameworks and policy commitments
- **Enforcing the rules:** The Wetlands Authorities are responsible for ensuring the enforcement of the Wetlands Rules and other relevant acts, rules and regulations.
- **Penalties:** Undertaking any prohibited or regulated activities beyond the thresholds (defined by the state/UT administration) in the wetlands or its zone of influence, will be deemed violations under the Wetlands Rules. Violation of the Rules will attract penalties as per the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.