

World Wildlife Day (WWD) 2023

March 4, 2023

In news— March 3 is known as World Wildlife Day (WWD), marked annually to draw attention to issues of conservation of flora and fauna.

About the day-

- In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed March 3 as the UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of protecting the world's wild animals and plants.
- This was as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed in 1973 on this day.
- March 3 marks the 50th anniversary of CITES' establishment.
- CITES is considered a landmark agreement on conservation that focuses on ensuring the sustainability of endangered species.
- **The theme for 2023 is 'Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation'.**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (or CITES)-

- CITES is an international agreement between governments.
- Its aim is to **ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants** does not threaten the survival of the species.
- **Currently, there are 184 parties to the convention, including India.**
- **The CITES Secretariat is administered by UNEP** (The United Nations Environment Programme) and is located in

Geneva, Switzerland.

- The Conference of the Parties to **CITES is the supreme consensus-based decision-making body** of the Convention and comprises all its parties.
- **The species covered under CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.**
 1. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted rarely, only in “exceptional circumstances”, such as gorillas, and lions from India.
 2. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled to ensure their survival. For example, certain kinds of foxes and Hippopotamuses.
 3. Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade, like the Bengal fox or the Golden Jackal from India. Different procedures are given category-wise to engage in the trade of species in each of the lists.
- In India, apart from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is a statutory body under the Ministry that is especially meant to combat organised wildlife crime in the country.
- It assists and advises the customs authorities in the inspection of the consignments of flora and fauna as per the provisions of the Wild Life Protection Act of 1972, CITES and the export and import policy governing items.