

# New government is hard on wildlife crime

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On 11 February, this year a new caretaker Government was formed in Bangladesh. The new Government determined to establish the role of discipline and law in all aspects in the country. The Government determined to eradicate corruption from all sectors. Many ex-ministers, political leaders, powerful persons, businessmen, and government officers have been arrested and taken to the Court by the caretaker Government due to their illegal activities and corruption.

The Government ordered the Forest Department to take action against the people and institutions that illegally collected wildlife and were rearing without permission from the government. The Forest Department and Joint Force collected information from throughout the country in this regard. The Forest Department had given a court case by the Wildlife Conservation Act, 1974 against these people.

Some powerful persons of ex- ruling party, political leader, business man, high government officials had created mini zoos in different sizes for their personal interest and sometimes for commercial purpose. Many of them were arrested by Joint Force and wildlife was seized by Joint Force and forest personnel with the help of Veterinary Surgeon of Dulahazara safari Park.

The seized animals were sent to the Government owned wildlife conservation centre, i.e., Dulahazara Safari Park, Banskhal Eco park, Mymensingh under the Forest Department.

The Veterinary Surgeon tranquilized, captured and transported the animals from different places to Dulahazara Safari Park, Banskhal Eco Park and some other conservation centres, visiting Dhaka, Sylhet, Shavar, Faridpur, Shirajpur, Karanigonj, Matuail, Feni, Chonathi, Cox's Bazar etc. Recently he visited Sylhet where there was a mini zoo with 51 wild animals and Rangpur to seize 38 spotted deer. When the action started against such people, some people who had collected and reared wildlife illegally were impressed to donate their animals to a wildlife conservation centre like Dulahazara Safari Park to escape prosecution. The Veterinary Surgeon collected this entire amount of donated animals from different places and from different person.

It was really interesting to have observed and participated in this and it will play very important role in wildlife conservation. Though Bangladesh has a law, the implementation and practice of law has been poor against wildlife conservation.

Due to this action against illegal poachers and owners of wildlife, the people of Bangladesh now

are more conscious and motivated about wildlife conservation. The news of wildlife seizure and release to government conservation centres had a good coverage in electronic and press media. To protect the Safari Park from over population regarding area and facility we are also sending seized animals to some other government area (Forest Dept.) where there is facility for that specific animal.

For a list of the animals that were seized, see the table on the next page.

Editors' Note : after this Dr. Malek was called to Kanaighat, Sylhet to seize another 6 spotted deer from the house of the political advisor of ex- Prime minister.

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## Wildlife Acts Involved in Conservation and Management of Wildlife in Bangladesh

### 1. Introduction :

Chakaria, Cox's Bazar

For preservation, conservation and management of wildlife "**Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) Order, 1973**" has been promulgated in 1973 as Presidential Order and which was subsequently amended and enacted in 1974 and named as "**Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) (Amend -ment) Act, 1974**". Before promulgation of this Wildlife Act the wildlife of this region were managed by some related Bengal Acts. e.g. The Elephant preservation Act, 1899. The Wild Birds and Animal Protection Act 1912. The Bengal Rhinoceros Preservation Act 1932 and the Forest Act 1927.

### 2. Some important provisions under this Act

**2.1 Constitution of Wildlife Advisory Board :** There is a provision for forming a **Wildlife Advisory Board under Article : 4**, to give advice and decision on different issues regarding wildlife management. The first wildlife Advisory Board constituted in April 1977. Since then 9 boards have been formed and 17 meeting of the board held so far. The present board is consists of 32 members headed by the concerned Minister and members of Parliament, University Teachers, Wildlife Experts and high official of different related organizations. The board holds meeting when deems necessary.

### **2.2 Constitution of Wildlife Sanctuary (WS), National Park (NP) and Game Reserve (GR) :**

Provision of constituting WS, NP and GR has been prescribed under Article-23 of the said Act. The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare any area to be Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park

and Game Reserve. All are Protected Areas. Wildlife Sanctuary enjoys greater degree of Protection than that of National Park. No specific rules detailed out for the Game Reserve in the Wildlife Act. There are 17 Protected Areas. Among them 7 are Wildlife Sanctuaries, 10 are National Parks and 1 Game Reserve. Total Protected Area is 2500 ha.

**Wildlife Sanctuary** means an area closed to hunting, shooting or trapping of wild animals and declared as such under Article 23 by the Government as undisturbed breeding ground primarily for the protection of wild life inclusive of all natural resources, such as vegetation, soil and water.

National Park means comparatively large areas of outstanding scenic and natural beauty with the primary object of protection and preservation of scenery, flora and fauna in the natural state to which access for public recreation and education and research may be allowed:

### **2.3 Punishment under this Act :**

Provision of punishment has been prescribed under Article-26 of the said Act. Contravenes or attempts to contravene the provisions of this Act, offender shall be punished with imprisonment which may, subject to the minimum of six months, extend to one year and also with a fine which may, subject to the minimum of Taka five hundred, extend to Taka one thousand and maximum punishment shall be with imprisonment which may, subject to the minimum of one year, extend to two years and also with a fine which may, subject to the minimum to Taka one thousand, extend to Taka two thousand.

### **2.4 Schedules under this Act :**

#### **There are three schedules under this Act :**

##### **First Schedule :**

**Part-I :** List of Crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals of Bangladesh which are open to shooting and may be hunted on an ordinary game hunting permit. (Since 1998 issuing of hunting permit is closed by the order of government).

**Part-II :** List of mammals, reptiles and birds of Bangladesh for the hunting of which a special permit is required (Problem animals).

##### **Second Schedule :**

Wild animals, trophies or meat for the possession, transfer or import of which a certificate or lawful possession is required.

##### **Third Schedule :**

Protected animals, i.e., animals which shall not be hunted, killed or captured.

### **2.5 Power to discharge some important Functions under this Act :**

to stop for checking any animal, person, package, vessel, vehicle on suspicion by an appointed officer (Article-16)

All forest officers not below the rank of foresters and all police officers not below the rank of Sub-Inspectors within their respective jurisdiction.

**to seize any wild animals along with firearms, nets, traps etc. used or suspected to have been used in the commission of an offence (Article-17)**

All forest officers not below the rank of foresters and all police officers not below the rank of Sub-Inspectors within their respective jurisdiction.

### **to demand of lawful possession certificate (Article-18)**

All forest officers not below the rank of foresters and all police officers not below the rank of Sub-Inspectors within their respective jurisdiction.

### **to dispose seized property subject to speedy and natural decay (Article-20)**

All forest officers not below the rank of Deputy Conservator of Foresters or Divisional Forest Officers within their respective jurisdiction.

### **to complain or file case to court against any offence under this Act (Article-27)**

All forest officers not below the rank of Deputy Conservator of Foresters or Divisional Forest Officers and all police officers in-charge of the Police-stations within their respective jurisdiction.

### **to confiscate in absence of the offender (Article-29)**

All forest officers not below the rank of Deputy Conservator of Foresters or Divisional Forest Officers within their respective jurisdiction.

### **to arrest without warrant (Article-31)**

All forest officers not below the rank of forest or Senior Wildlife Scout.

### **to release the offender on execution of bond (Article-32)**

All forest officers not below the rank of forest Ranger or Wildlife Supervisor.

### **to compound offenses under this Act by an appointed officer (Article-36)**

Conservator forests, Wildlife & Nature Conservation Circle.

### **3. Bangladesh crab export rules 1998.**

Government made these rules for carrying effective export of crab as per provision of wildlife Act.

### **4. Wildlife and Trade :**

**4.1** Trade is mainly regulated by Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation (Amendment) Act 1974. But trade of the species which are included in the list of CTES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) are also regulated by CTES rules & regulation. The Chief Conservator of Forests is the CTES **Management Authority** in Bangladesh.

### **4.2 Presently trade of all kinds of animals is band. Only the crab is allowed to export.**

(i) Export of Turtles closed from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2001 vide memo no. of the Ministry of Environment and Forest: MoEF (Sha-3)/36/98(1)/405.

(ii) Export of Skin of Lizards and Snakes closed from 8 November 1999 vide memo no. of the Ministry of Environment and Forest : MoEF (Sha-3) /43/98-944.

(iii) stopped all types of kind. Hunting and Shooting from 28 June 1998 vide memo no. of the Ministry of Environment and Forest: MoEF (Sha-3) 13/98/347.