

INDIA MOVES TO INCLUDE ELEPHANT, BUSTARD IN GLOBAL CONSERVATION LIST

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

A herd of wild elephant searching for food in a forested area near Panbari village, on the outskirts of Guwahati. | Photo Credit: [AP](#)

India will be moving to include the Asian Elephant and the Great Indian Bustard in the list of species that merit heightened conservation measures. The list will be debated at the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), an environment treaty under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The COP is scheduled to be organised from February 17 to 22 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. There are 130 parties to the convention and India has been a member since 1983.

“We expect the COP to clear the inclusion of the Great Indian Bustard and the elephant as it has been vetted by technical experts and reflects the consensus of several countries. The elephant faces risks particularly in neighbouring Bangladesh and Nepal,” Soumitra Dasgupta, a senior official in the Union Environment Ministry told *The Hindu*.

India is home to several migratory species of wildlife, including the snow leopard, Amur falcons, bar-headed geese, black-necked cranes, marine turtles, dugongs and hump-backed whales.

Having the elephant and the Great Indian Bustard in the list — more formally known as Appendix 1 — would coax countries neighbouring India, where wild animals such as tigers and elephant foray into, to direct more resources and attention to protecting them. There are now 173 species in the Appendix 1.

Representatives from across the world, and conservationists and international NGOs working in wildlife conservation, are expected to attend the COP, which will also see Prime Minister Narendra Modi address the gathering via video conference.

The Union Environment Ministry reports India as having 29,964 elephants according to the Project Elephant Census in 2017. The pachyderm merits the highest level of protection, or Schedule 1, under the Wildlife Protection Act.

India has been designated the President of the COP for the next three years. “The government of India has been taking necessary actions to protect and conserve migratory marine species. Seven species that include Dugong, Whale Shark, Marine Turtle (two species), have been identified for preparation of Conservation and Recovery Action Plan,” the Ministry said in a statement.

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