

Kolamarka and Tansa Wildlife Sanctuaries

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

Recently, the Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) elevate the Kolamarka Conservation Reserve to a full-fledged Wildlife Sanctuary and expand the boundaries of the existing Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary.

Key Highlights

Parameter	Kolamarka Wildlife Sanctuary	Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary (Expansion)
District & Region	Gadchiroli District (Eastern Vidarbha region)	Thane & Palghar Districts (Western Ghats foothills)
Primary Flagship Species	Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo (<i>Bubalus arnee</i>) — endangered state animal species isolated in central India.	Leopard, Sloth Bear, Forest Owlet (<i>Athene blewitti</i>), and diverse avian populations.
Ecosystem & Rivers	Tropical dry deciduous forests & bamboo thickets along the Pranhita and Indravati river basins.	Tropical moist deciduous forests protecting catchments for Tansa, Vaitarna, and Modak Sagar reservoirs .
Key Objective	Elevated protection status from Conservation Reserve to Sanctuary to establish inviolate core zones against habitat degradation.	Securing wildlife movement corridors and protecting vital drinking water catchments supplying the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Statutory Procedure

- SANCTUARY DECLARATION UNDER WILDLIFE (PROTECTION) ACT, 1972.
 - **STEP 1** - SBWL Approval & State Govt Intent Notification (Section 18).
 - **STEP 2**- Settlement of Rights by Collector (Sections 19-25).
 - **STEP 3** - Final State Notification Declaring Sanctuary (Section 26A).

Section 18 vs Section 26A (WPA, 1972)

- The state government notifies its intention to declare a sanctuary under **Section 18**, followed by the settlement of traditional community rights, after which the final notification is issued under **Section 26A**.

Conservation Reserves vs Wildlife Sanctuaries

- **Conservation Reserve (Section 36A)** - Uninhabited government-owned land adjacent to national parks/sanctuaries where local communities participate in management through an advisory committee.
- **Wildlife Sanctuary (Section 26A)**- Higher degree of legal protection; commercial exploitation is prohibited, and human activities (like non-timber forest produce collection or grazing) are strictly regulated by the Chief Wildlife Warden.

Strategic Significance

- **Wild Water Buffalo Conservation**- Central India's isolated wild buffalo populations in Gadchiroli face severe genetic bottlenecks and interbreeding risks with domestic cattle.
- Higher sanctuary status enables dedicated habitat management and anti-poaching enforcement.
- **Western Ghats Watershed Protection**- Expanding Tansa protects crucial forest canopy that prevents reservoir siltation, ensuring long-term ecological and water security for western Maharashtra's urban clusters.



Reference

[The Hindu | Kolamarka Wildlife Sanctuary and Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary](#)