World Wildlife Day, 2026

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Government policies and initiatives*

Why in News?

Recently, the National Zoological Park celebrated World Wildlife Day 2026 by organising awareness and outreach activities within the zoo premises.

- **Observed on – *3rd March, every year.***
- **Origin –** In 2013, by the United Nations General Assembly.
- **Commemoration –** The ***signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)*** in 1973.
- **Objective –** To celebrate *wild animals & plants*, recognise their unique roles and contributions of wildlife to people and the planet.

Key Highlights, 2026

- **Theme, 2026 –** "***Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods"***
- **Focus** - It highlighted the critical role of wild plants in global healthcare, traditional knowledge, and sustainable economies.
- **Global Dependence** - An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 wild species are harvested for their healing properties, with **70–95%** of people in developing countries relying on traditional plant-based medicine.
- **Conservation Urgency** - Over 20% of these plant species are currently threatened with extinction due to habitat loss, overharvesting, and climate change.
- **Initiatives -** The UN Postal Administration launched the 2026 ***Endangered Species Stamp Series*** during the official celebration.
- **Global Virtual Celebration -** The UN held a high-level virtual event on March 3rd featuring "Lightning Talks" on species like Frankincense, Jatamansi, and Chamomile.
- **Youth Art Contest -** 15-year-old Jia Yoo from South Korea was announced as the Grand Prize Winner of the International Youth Art

Contest, which saw over 4,200 entries from 117 countries.

- **National Observances -**
  - **India -** Celebrated its "Green Wealth" by highlighting the National Medicinal Plants Board's work in the Himalayas and Western Ghats.
  - PM reaffirmed India's commitment to wildlife conservation, specifically highlighting the importance of traditional systems like Ayurveda and the protection of rare herbs in national parks like the *Valley of Flowers and Periyar Tiger Reserve*.
  - **Australia -** Focused on protecting native species like the Waddy-wood tree and Davidson's plum, which are culturally significant to First Nations peoples.

References

1. PIB | National Zoological Park, New Delhi celebrates World Wildlife Day 2026
2. PIB | World Wildlife Day 2026

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