

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB

Bill No. 06 of 2025

THE PUNJAB WILDLIFE (PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2025

A

Bill

further to amend the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974.

It is necessary further to amend the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974 (II of 1974) for the purposes hereinafter appearing.

Be it enacted by Provincial Assembly of the Punjab as follows:

1. Short title and commencement.- (1) This Act may be cited as the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) (Amendment) Act 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 2 of Act II of 1974.- In the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974, for brevity referred to as 'the Act', in section 2:

(a) after clause (a), the following shall be inserted:

“(ab) “captive animal” means a wild animal as reflected in First Schedule, Second Schedule and Fourth Schedule and is in captivity under a licence as provided in section 10-B;”;

(b) after clause (b), the following shall be inserted:

“(ba) “Chief Wildlife Ranger” means the Chief Wildlife Ranger as provided in section 30-D of this Act;”;

(c) after clause (bb), the following shall be inserted:

“(cc) “Code” means the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (V of 1898);

(dd) “Court” means a Special Court notified under section 30-I of this Act;

(ee) “cruelty to animal” means depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, or veterinary care or an act of torturing, maiming, displaying, poisoning, killing or arranging fighting between animals or birds save as otherwise provided under this Act;”;

(d) after clause (ccc), the following shall be inserted:

“(cccc) “First Information Report” means a written document formulated by an authorized Wildlife Ranger on receipt of a report or information oral or written from a Wildlife Ranger or any person about the commission of a cognizable offence punishable under this Act or Punjab Protected Areas Act, 2020 (XXIII of 2020);”;

(e) after clause (g), the following shall be inserted:

“(ga) “Investigating Officer” means such Wildlife Ranger appointed by the Chief Wildlife Ranger to investigate the case registered with the Wildlife Protection Center under this Act;”;

(f) after clause (j), the following shall be inserted:

“(ja) “offender” means a person who has committed or against whom there is a reasonable belief or suspicion that he has committed a violation or offence under this Act or Punjab Protected Areas Act

2020 (XXIII of 2020);”;

- (g) for clause (k), the following shall be substituted:
 “(k) “officer” means the Chief Wildlife Warden, Director General Wildlife and Parks, Chief Wildlife Ranger, Additional Chief Wildlife Ranger, Deputy Chief Wildlife Ranger, Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger, Head Wildlife Ranger, Senior Wildlife Ranger and Wildlife Ranger or any other officer appointed to perform any function under this Act;”;
- (h) clause (m) shall be omitted;
- (i) after clause (mmm), the following shall be inserted:
 “(mmmm) “Prosecutor” means a Prosecutor as defined under the Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) Act 2006 (III of 2006);”;
- (j) after clause (r), the following shall be inserted:
 “(ra) “whistle-blower” means a person who, in public interest, discloses to Wildlife Ranger an actual or suspected violation or offence for cognizance under this Act or the Punjab Protected Areas Act 2020 (XXIII of 2020);”;
- (k) after clause (u), the following shall be inserted:
 “(ua) “Wildlife Protection Center” means a center notified under section 30-A of this Act;” and
- (l) for clause (v), the following shall be substituted:
 “(v) “unprotected animal” means a wild animal specified in the Fourth Schedule appended to this Act.”.

3. Substitution of section 3 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, for section 3, the following shall be substituted:

“3. Appointment of officers and officials.- Government may determine the number and class of officers, officials and other staff to be appointed under this Act on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed.”.

4. Omission of section 4 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, section 4, shall be omitted.

5. Amendment of section 5 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, in section 5, for sub-sections (4), (5), (6) and (7), the following shall be substituted:

“(4) The Minister for Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries shall be the Chairman of the Board and he shall also be the Chief Wildlife Warden under this Act.

(5) The Secretary to the Government, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Department shall be the Vice-Chairman and *ex-officio* member of the Board.

(6) A member, other than *ex-officio* member, shall, unless he sooner resigns or is removed by Government, hold office for such term as may be prescribed.

(7) The Director General, Wildlife and Parks shall be the Secretary and *ex-officio* member of the Board.”.

6. Substitution of section 10 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, for section 10, the following shall be substituted:

“10. Prohibition to employ hawk, falcon or dog without special licence.— No person shall employ a hawk for hawking or falcon for falconry or dog for coursing as game animal except under a licence issued for the purpose under this Act.”.

7. Insertion of section 10-A and 10-B in Act II of 1974.- In the Act, after section 10, the following shall be inserted:

“10-A. Cruelty to animal prohibited.- No person shall be allowed to act or manage or demonstrate or try to act or manage or demonstrate any activity in respect of cruelty to a wild animal.

10-B. Captivity of a wild animal.- No person shall keep a wild animal reflected in Schedules I, II and IV as captive animal except under a licence to be issued by the Director General, Wildlife and Parks in such manner, on payment of such fee and on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed.”.

8. Amendment of section 20 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, in section 20:

- (a) for the heading, the following shall be substituted:
“Private safari parks, private wildlife parks, private wildlife breeding farms and circus”;
- (b) in sub-section (1), clause (a) shall be omitted; and
- (c) sub-section (2) shall be omitted.

9. Amendment of section 21 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, in section 21:

- (a) existing section shall be numbered as “(1)”;
- (b) for clauses (i) and (ii), the following shall be substituted:
 - “(i) any provision of sections 9, 11, 12, 13, 20 and 28, except clauses (ii) and (x) of section 9, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years but not less than two years, or with fine up to one million rupees but not less than fifty thousand rupees, or with both, along with confiscation of weapon, article, vehicle, equipment, machinery or any other thing used in commission of offence under this Act;
 - (ii) any provision of clauses (ii) and (x) of section 9, sections 10, 14 and 15, except clauses (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) of sub-section (2) of section 16-A and clauses (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) of sub-section (6) of section 18-A, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years but not less than five years or with fine up to five million rupees but not less than one hundred thousand rupees or with both, along with confiscation of weapon, article, vehicle, equipment, machinery or any other article used in commission of offence under this Act; and”;
- (c) after sub-section (1), as amended above, the following shall be added:
 - “(2) An offence punishable under clauses (i) and (ii) shall be deemed to be cognizable and non-bailable for the purposes of the Code and shall be triable as provided under section 30-I.”.

10. Amendment of section 22 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, in section 22, for the words “as the offence”, the words, “with such punishment as provided for the offence abetted” shall be substituted.

11. Insertion of section 22-A, 22-B, 22-C and 22-D in Act II of 1974.- In the Act, after section 22, the following shall be inserted:

“22-A. Whistle-blower disclosure.- (1) Any person making a whistle-blower disclosure shall make a personal declaration that the information disclosed and allegations contained therein declaration are true to the best of his knowledge and belief, and are not disclosed for any personal reason.

(2) Every whistle-blower disclosure shall be made in writing or electronic form in such manner and accompanied by such documents or other material as may be prescribed.

(3) Upon receipt of whistle-blower disclosure, the Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or any other authorized officer shall make an assessment of the information contained in the disclosure and verify the same under intimation to the next higher authority in such manner as may be prescribed.

(4) Upon assessment and verification under sub-section (3), if the Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or authorized officer is of the view that the whistle-blower disclosure warrants further probe, inquiry or investigation, he

shall complete such probe immediately but not later than twenty-four hours and take necessary action, if so required.

22-B. Reward and punishment.- (1) If any violation or offence is successfully detected by the Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or authorized officer on whistle-blower disclosure and offender is punished in consequence of such disclosure, such whistle-blower may be paid a reward as may be prescribed in addition to a certificate of appreciation by the Chief Wildlife Ranger:

Provided that in case of disclosures by more than one whistle-blowers for the same violation or offence, reward shall be equitably distributed amongst such whistle-blowers based on their respective contribution, as determined and deemed fit by the Chief Wildlife Ranger.

(2) In case a whistle-blower discloses such information which he knows or believes to be false, frivolous or vexatious and on such disclosure Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or authorized officer takes action under this Act, such whistle-blower shall, subject to being provided an opportunity of being heard, be liable to be punished with fine which may extend up to one hundred thousand rupees.

22-C. Protection of whistle-blower.- (1) The identity of a whistle-blower, other than provided in sub-section (2) of section 22-C, shall not be disclosed even after conclusion of proceedings, except with written consent of such whistle-blower, and in case, unauthorized disclosure of identity of such whistle-blower is made by an officer or official, it shall amount to misconduct under the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability Act 2006.

(2) The Chief Wildlife Ranger may, in consultation with whistle-blower, take necessary measure for his protection for such duration and in such manner as may be prescribed.

22-D. Incentive and compensation.- (1) The Chief Wildlife Ranger may grant incentive or reward to Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or any other officer or official, who has made exceptional effort towards accomplishing the objective of this Act, in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) Where Investigating Officer or Wildlife Ranger or any other officer or official suffers any bodily injury by any reason during performing his official duty for the purposes of this Act, Chief Wildlife Ranger may grant him such compensation as may be prescribed.”.

12. Insertion of sections 30-A, 30-B, 30-C, 30-D, 30-E, 30-F, 30-G, 30-H and 30-I in Act II of 1974.- In the Act, after section 30, the following shall be inserted:

“30-A. Establishment of Wildlife Protection Centers.- (1) The Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, establish or declare one or more places or premises, generally or specially, as Wildlife Protection Center for the purposes of this Act to exercise such powers and perform such functions in such area as may be provided in the notification.

(2) Each Wildlife Protection Center shall consist of:

- (a) Head Wildlife Ranger;
- (b) Senior Wildlife Ranger;
- (c) Wildlife Ranger; and
- (d) any other official.

(3) The supervision of Wildlife Protection Center shall vest with an officer not below the rank of Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger and Head Wildlife Ranger shall be incharge of Wildlife Protection Center and, in his absence, Senior Wildlife Ranger shall be the incharge.

(4) The Chief Wildlife Ranger or his authorized officer may assign any officer to perform such duties in the Wildlife Protection Center for such a period and on such terms and conditions as may be provided in the order.

(5) The Wildlife Ranger shall be authorized to wear such uniform,

carry such ammunition, keep such identification card or tag such badge and in such manner as may be prescribed.

(6) Each Wildlife Protection Center shall be provided such marked vehicles and motorbikes as may be deemed necessary.

(7) The supervision and administration of Wildlife Protection Center shall be made in such manner as may be prescribed.

30-B. Powers and functions of incharge of Wildlife Protection Center.— (1) An incharge of Wildlife Protection Center shall perform such functions and exercise such powers in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) In addition to the powers and functions as may be prescribed under sub-section (1), incharge of Wildlife Protection Center, within its territorial jurisdiction, shall also:

- (a) enforce and execute decisions of Government;
- (b) enforce provisions of this Act and the Punjab Protected Areas Act 2020 (XXIII of 2020);
- (c) conduct inspections and inquiries;
- (d) register FIRs and conduct investigations;
- (e) arrest and submit reports;
- (f) issue orders under directions of the Board or Chief Wildlife Ranger; and
- (g) exercise such other powers and perform such other functions as may be delegated to him by the Chief Wildlife Ranger.

30-C. Maintenance of record at Wildlife Protection Center.— The incharge of Wildlife Protection Center shall be responsible to maintain record in such manner as may be prescribed.

30-D. Chief Wildlife Ranger.— (1) The Director General, Wildlife and Parks shall act as Chief Wildlife Ranger under this Act and shall:

- (a) be responsible for implementation of provisions of this Act and rules made thereunder;
- (b) also have powers of Wildlife Ranger for the purposes of this Act; and
- (c) exercise such other powers and perform such other functions as may be prescribed.

(2) The Chief Wildlife Ranger or in-charge of Wildlife Protection Center may direct to establish such number of wildlife check posts at such place as may be deemed appropriate to prevent an offence and to protect wildlife under this Act.

30-E. Powers and functions of an officer.— (1) Subject to provisions of this Act, an officer, within his assigned jurisdiction, may, in a cognizable offence, arrest any person against whom a reasonable suspicion exists or credible information has been received of his having been involved in an offence, and, for this purpose, shall exercise all powers of a police-officer provided in the Code.

(2) An officer not below the rank of Assistant Chief Wildlife Ranger may seal any private wildlife reserve, private wildlife park and private safari park, if he has reason to believe that such private wildlife reserve, private wildlife park and private safari park is being established or used in contravention of provisions of this Act, or rules made thereunder.

(3) An officer may seize any wildlife animal, dead, or alive, trophy and its meat together with any firearm, net, trap, snare, bow, arrow or vehicle or vessel or anything whatsoever used or suspected to have been used in commission of offence under this Act.

(4) An officer not below the rank of Senior Wildlife Ranger may

search and seize any shop or building or house or place where wild animal, parts of dead wildlife animal, trophy and its meat is kept, stored, hanged or displayed without authority or permission of Director General, Wildlife and Parks and may arrest owner of such shop, building or house, as the case may be.

(5) An officer not below the rank of Senior Wildlife Ranger may arrest any person who made any picture or photo or movie or clip or TikTok or any motion picture of hunting of any wild animal prohibited for hunting or game animal with any electronic or digital device or uploaded such picture, photo, movie, clip or TikTok on internet or any other social or electronic media platform and shall impound such electronic or digital device.

(6) An officer may perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Chief Wildlife Ranger.

30-F. Investigating Officer.- (1) The Chief Wildlife Ranger shall, by notification, appoint as many Investigating Officers for each Wildlife Protection Center as it may deem appropriate.

(2) The Investigating Officer shall have powers:

- (a) to enter, inspect, search and seal any public property, building, place or any premises where he has reason to believe that an offence under this Act has occurred or is apprehension of so happening;
- (b) to enter, inspect, search and seal any private property, building or place, subject to warrant or order of the Magistrate in whose jurisdiction such premises situate, where he has reason to believe that an offence under this Act has occurred or is apprehension of so happening;
- (c) to stop, inspect, search and seize any vehicle for the purposes of this Act;
- (d) issue notice or summon to offender under this Act;
- (e) seize any item, goods, article or property used in or relevant to prove the commission of offence, provided that every such item shall be listed in the register of seized items in the prescribed manner;
- (f) to use reasonable force, in case of retaliation or obstruction during discharge of his functions under this Act;
- (g) to collect evidence through electronic means to inquire or investigate, such as CCTV camera recording, video recording, audio recording, photographs, electronic data, caller data records, mobile device tracking, and digital forensics;
- (h) to get FIRs registered at Wildlife Protection Center;
- (i) save as in this Act, Investigating Officer shall also have all such powers as provided in the Code for the purposes of investigation; and
- (j) such other powers as may be prescribed.

30-G. Procedure to be followed after arrest.- (1) The arrest of a person shall be brought into the knowledge of incharge of Wildlife Protection Center and such arrested person shall, without unnecessary delay but not later than twenty-four hours from his arrest, be produced before the Court or in absence of Court before the area Magistrate for remand.

(2) The incharge of Protection Wildlife Center shall also submit a report about the registration of case to Chief Wildlife Ranger in such manner as may be prescribed.

30-H. Cognizance and trial of offences.- (1) A Special Court, duly notified by

the Government, and in its absence Magistrate under section 30 of the Code shall take cognizance and try offence in the manner as provided in the Code and award punishment under this Act.

(2) An officer under this Act shall be a competent witness for the purposes of this Act before the Court.

30-I. Submission of report.- Report of the case shall be submitted in the Court through concerned District Public Prosecutor who shall defend the case in the Court.”.

13. Amendment of section 38 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, in section 38, for sub-section (3), the following shall be substituted;

“(3) The sum of money accepted as compensation under clause (a) of sub-section (1) shall be up to fifty thousand rupees at first charge to commit an offence under this Act and on repetition of offence, the amount of compensation shall be not less than the double of the amount of compensation accepted at first time.”.

14. Insertion of section 44-B in Act II of 1974.- In the Act, after section 44-A, the following shall be inserted:

“44-B. Hunting of wild animals.- Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, Chief Wildlife Ranger or any officer authorized by him may, if he is satisfied that any wild animal has become dangerous to human being or other species or is so disabled or diseased as to be beyond recovery, by order, in writing and stating the reasons therefor, cull such animal or cause such animal to be culled in such manner as may be prescribed.”.

15. Omission of sections 31, 32, 34, 35 and 36 of Act II of 1974.- In the Act, sections 31, 32, 34, 35 and 36 shall be omitted.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The violations against protection, preservation and conservation of wildlife have been increased in the recent years. The proposed enhancement in penalties will serve as a strong deterrence for the illegal hunters. The value of wildlife species has enhanced manifold globally in the recent years. Resultantly the violation of wildlife law has been enhanced. To combat against such violation there have been imminent need to increase the penalties. The existing penalties were enhanced in 2007 and 17 years have passed in between. The existing penalties being not commensurate with the present scenario require revision / enhancement to curb the commission of wildlife offences. Presently majority of wildlife offences are bailable and the courts were not taking it seriously and resort to award nominal fines and punishment to the wildlife offenders. Now non-bailable imprisonment penalties have been proposed to give a strong message to the wildlife offenders to refrain from commission of offence. Hence, this bill.

MINISTER INCHARGE

Lahore:
January 13, 2025

CH AMER HABIB
Secretary General