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Q91

In India, if a species of tortoise is declared protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, what does it imply? (a) It enjoys the same level of protection as the tiger. (b) It no longer exists in the wild, a few individuals are under captive protection; and now it is impossible to prevent its extinction. (c) It is endemic to a particular region of India. (d) Both Official key: A.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2017 · General Studies · 2 marks · Environment and Ecology

Environment, ecology, climate, biodiversity - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a) Official key**

• **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 gives the highest legal protection:** hunting is prohibited except in narrowly defined cases, with the stiffest penalties. The tiger is a Schedule I species. A tortoise placed on Schedule I therefore enjoys the same statutory protection level as the tiger. That is why (a) is the official key.

(b)

Schedule I does not mean the species is already extinct in the wild or that extinction cannot be prevented. Many Schedule I taxa still have wild populations. This option is not the key.

(c)

Endemism is a biogeographic fact, not a legal consequence of the Schedule. A Schedule I species may be widespread or endemic. This option is therefore wrong.

(d)

Option (d) as 'Both' would treat (b) and (c) as jointly true. Extinction-in-the-wild and endemism do not follow from a Schedule I listing. This option is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (a). WPA schedules grade animals by protection; Schedule I is the top tier shared by tiger, elephant and listed reptiles including some tortoises. Listing is not a declaration of extinction or of endemism. Penalties and hunting bans are what the Schedule changes. Only (a) states the legal implication.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

WPA 1972 schedules

I-VI originally; plants and animals listed with different protection

Schedule I examples

Tiger, snow leopard, great Indian bustard, many turtles/tortoises

Hunting ban

Section 9; exceptions tightly drawn

CITES

International trade convention; distinct from WPA schedules

NTCA / Project Tiger

Tiger is Schedule I and a specially managed species

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