

MINUTES OF 47th MEETING OF THE ESZ EXPERT COMMITTEE FOR DECLARATION OF THE ECO-SENSITIVE ZONE (ESZ) AROUND PROTECTED AREAS (WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES / NATIONAL PARKS / TIGER RESERVES) HELD ON 17th AUGUST, 2021 THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING.

The 47th Meeting of the Expert Committee on Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary to the Government of India on 17th August, 2021 through Video Conferencing. The list of the participants is at **Annexure-I**.

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed members of the Expert Committee and other participants. After a brief introduction of the participants, the Chairman invited states to present their proposals as per Agenda.

Item No. 3.1: Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka

PCCF (Wild Life), Department of Forest, Government of Karnataka made a presentation on the proposal ESZ around Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary. It was informed that draft ESZ notification of Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 07th June 2021 and its salient features are as follows:

Area of PA : 100.48 sq.km
Proposed ESZ area : 95.53 sq.km
Proposed Extent : 575 m to 1.0 km

2. It was also stated that Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Chitradurga District of Karnataka State and major fauna of the sanctuary includes black buck, spotted deer, common langur, common fox, hyena, Indian wolf, jungle cat, Indian porcupine, jackal, sloth bear, etc.

3. The representative of the State Government further stated that the comments/objections and suggestions received from stakeholders have been duly addressed and public consultations was held with local elected representatives, panchayat and the State Cabinet has duly endorsed the draft notification. After examination of the public comments the State Government reiterated the recommendations for notification of ESZ as per draft notification.

4. It was also informed to the Committee that other proposals of declaration of ESZ around Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagarhole Tiger Reserve Karnataka are still pending for approval by the State Government and will be submitted soon.

5. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Jogimatti Wildlife Sanctuary.*

Item No. 3.2: Veerangana Durgawati Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh

Divisional Forest Officer, Damoh, Department of Forest, Government of Madhya Pradesh made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that draft ESZ re-notification of Veerangana Durgawati Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 12th March, 2021 and its salient features are as follows:

Area of PA : 23.97 sq.km
Proposed ESZ area : 99.73 sq.km
Proposed Extent : uniform 2.0 kms

2. The representative of the State Government informed the Committee that the proposal was earlier deliberated at length in the 46th Expert Committee Meeting held on 25.06.2021 and the Committee had deferred its recommendation because the desired response on public comments on the draft notification from the State Government was not available. The representative of the State Government informed that comments/objection and suggestion received from stakeholders in response to the draft notification have been duly considered by the State Government and submitted to the Ministry. After examination of the public comments the State Government reiterated the recommendations for notification of ESZ as per draft notification.

3. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification for Veerangana Durgawati Wildlife Sanctuary.*

4. The Committee informed the representative of the State Government that submission of additional information in regard to amendments sought for some ESZ notifications of Madhya Pradesh are yet to be received in the Ministry. To this the State Government representative informed that these are under consideration and will be submitted soon.

Item No. 3.3: Tokalo Wildlife Sanctuary, Mizoram

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forest, Government of Mizoram made a presentation. It was informed that draft ESZ notification of Tokalo Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 28th January, 2021 and its salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 250 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 56.385 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0 (zero) to 1.5 kms

2. The representative of the State Government informed the Committee that a detailed deliberation was made on the proposal in the 46th Meeting of the Expert Committee Meeting held on 25.06.2021 and the Committee had deferred its recommendation because the desired response on public comments on the draft notification from the State Government was not available. The representative of the State Government informed that comments/objection and suggestion received from stakeholders in response to the draft notification have been duly considered by the State Government and submitted to the Ministry. The State Government accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification.

3. The Committee noted that there seem to be few discrepancies in the number of villages listed in the draft notification and the information now provided in the presentation made. It was also observed that the shape file/kml file shared by the State Government has also slight variation in the GPS points in the published draft notification. The representatives of the State Government agreed that the same will be cross checked and necessary rectifications made and submitted to the Ministry.

4. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification subject to submission of clarification as mentioned in para 3 above.*

5. The Committee noted that the proposal of ESZ around Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park is pending at the State level and requested that the same may be expedited and submitted early.

Item No. 3.4: Sri Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve, Andhra Pradesh

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forest, Government of Andhra Pradesh made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that draft ESZ notification of Sri Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve was published on 11th February 2020 and its salient features are as follows:

Area of PA : 3727.82 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 2149.68 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0 (zero) to 5 km (rectified as 26.00 km)

2. The matter was earlier discussed in the 41st Expert Committee Meeting held on 23-24th June, 2020, wherein, the Committee had suggested to rationalize the area of ESZ by keeping boundary of buffer zone of Tiger Reserve apart from ESZ. It was also suggested by the Committee that suitable justification of ESZ extent lesser than 1 kilometres uniform cushion at two locations may be submitted. The required information has since been received in the Ministry along with the shape file/kml file of the ESZ & PA as well as Gazette notification of the protected area and the matter was placed for deliberation in the 46th Meeting held on 25.06.2021.

3. The Committee in the said 46th Meeting had noted that no comments have been received on the draft ESZ notification. The Committee however suggested that a written statement may be submitted stating that the State Government have taken due consultations with concerned stakeholders in accordance with the 'Guidelines for declaration of National Parks/ Wildlife Sanctuaries' issued by MoEFCC, while framing the draft ESZ notification. The State Govt. agreed to submit such a statement in a day or two. The representative from NTCA informed the Committee that the Authority had earlier concurred the proposal. Based on the deliberations held the proposal was kept in abeyance for reconsideration in the next meeting on the limited issue of ESZ extent and necessary corrections in the kml /shape files received in respect of ESZ boundary.

4. The representative of the State Government informed the Committee that while formulating the draft notification due consultation have taken place. It was also informed that Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve comprises of two Wildlife Sanctuaries viz. Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary. Representative of the State Government stated that the ESZ extent has been erroneously mentioned as 0 (zero) to 5 kilometers in draft notification and the same need to be read as 0 (zero) to 26 kilometers. It was however clarified that the boundary extent was only a typographical error as there is no change in the maps, villages and area. The map enclosed alongwith draft corresponds to 26 kms extent. Zero extent of ESZ is due to the fact that on certain stretches the PA boundary ends alongside of the Krishna river and on some stretch it adjoins interstate boundary with Telangana State, wherein, another protected area namely Amrabad Tiger Reserve is located contiguous to this Tiger Reserve. The ESZ extent of maximum 26.0 km is on account of buffer zone of Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary being taken within ESZ. The State Government accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification.

5. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification.*

6. The State Government representative was also requested to expedite submission of the pending ESZ proposals of Andhra Pradesh viz. Papikinda National Park and Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary.

Item No. 3.5: Borajan - Bherjan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam

Representative of the Department of Forest, Government of Assam made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that draft ESZ notification of Borajan - Bherjan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary was re-published on 7th June, 2021 and its salient features are as follows:

Area of PA : 7.21 sq.km

Proposed ESZ area : 39.79 sq.km
Proposed Extent : 400 m to 6.0 km (*now revised to 1.0 km all around*)

2. The representative of the State Government informed that the draft notification of the Borajan - Bherjan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 10.12.2015 and thereafter it has been revised three times. The draft notification now under deliberation was published on 07.06.2020 with ESZ area and extent as mentioned above.

3. It was informed to the Committee that these areas have high oil reserves and presently there are oil wells and drilling sites all around. The draft notification has included such areas within Eco-sensitive Zone but after the publication of draft notification comments/objection and suggestions were received from various stakeholders and several rounds of meetings held with numerous stakeholders including DG Hydrocarbons, Oil India Ltd., authorities of the Assam Government etc., it has been decided to revise the ESZ extent to 1.0 km uniform extent. *It was also informed that meeting was also held under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam and it was decided to exclude Barekuri area from ESZ. It was also decided that a suitable conservation plan for Hoolock Gibbons will be prepared for implementation, as the area is also habitat of isolated group of Hoolock Gibbons.* It was further stated that with the extent of the ESZ as uniform 1 km all around the Protected Area, the area of ESZ stands at 32.35 sq. km.

4. The Committee noted the information provided by the State Government and observed that the revision made has added new area in ESZ while some areas have been now excluded. The State Government representative stated that publication of new draft on account of changes in ESZ areas and extent is not necessary as consultation at appropriate level in the state has been done. *To this the Committee decided that a formal written confirmation to this effect shall be submitted by the State Government.*

5. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification with revised boundary extent subject to the following:*

- (i) Endorsement by the Wildlife Division that with the proposed changes in the ESZ features, the proposal is acceptable and the conservation plan for Hoolock Gibbons is adequate for its conservation;
- (ii) A detailed written justification/clarification of the revised ESZ extent by the State Government and areas along with maps indicating the changes and indicating the Protected Areas boundaries; and
- (iii) A written confirmation by the State Government that local public consultation on the proposed changes / revised ESZ extent and areas have been held.

Item No. 3.6: Silent Valley National Park Kerala

PCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forest, Government of Kerala made a presentation. It was informed that draft ESZ notification of Silent Valley National Park Kerala was re-published on 27th October 2020 and its salient features are as follows:

Area of PA : 89.52 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 148 sq km
Proposed Extent : zero to 9.8 kms

2. The Silent Valley National Park is situated in Palakkad district of Kerala and its landscape is the sole surviving pristine rain forest in Sahyan ranges supporting populations of the endangered species of the lion tailed macaque. It was informed that the proposal was earlier discussed in the 44th Expert Committee Meeting held on 18.01.2021 and it was informed that the ESZ extent ranges from 0 to 9.8 kms. Zero extent has been kept on the side adjoining the Mukurthi National Park. The Committee was also informed in the said 44th Meeting that public hearing was held and during the hearing it was initially thought by the local people that the ESZ is the same as the National Park, which was duly clarified. It was also stated that comments/objections and suggestions received from persons and stakeholders in response to the draft notification have been duly considered by the State Government. The Committee in the said meeting had desired that in order to enable the Ministry in integrating the ESZ boundaries in the Decision Support System, digitized map of the ESZ and protected area shall be submitted to the Ministry at the earliest. *Based on the presentation made and deliberations held, the Committee had recommended that the draft notification can be finalised subject submission of the digitised maps as noted above in a week's time.*

3. The shape/kml files, the Gazette notification of the Protected Area and public consultation report have been now received. However, the Ministry received a revised proposal dated 25.06.2021 and therefore the item was placed for clarification by the State Government. The representative of the State Government clarified that the revised proposal is the same as the one considered in the 44th Meeting and any variation may be only a clerical error and the same be ignored. The representative of the State Government further confirmed that all the concern and issues raised by the stakeholders in the draft notification was clarified and take into consideration for finalizing the ESZ area. The State Government accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification.

4. *Based on the deliberations made, the Committee reiterated that its earlier recommendation stands and the ESZ may be finalised.*

Item No. 3.7: Gorumara National Park, West Bengal

PCCF (Wildlife), Department of Forest, Government of West Bengal made a presentation and informed the Committee that draft ESZ notification of Gorumara National Park was published on 10th June 2020. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA	:	79.99 sq km
Proposed ESZ area	:	209.99 sq km
Proposed Extent	:	2.50 km to 5.00 km

2. It was informed that earlier proposal was discussed in the 42nd Expert Committee Meeting held on 18th August, 2020 and the Committee had recommended for finalization of the draft notification subject to submission of clarification on ESZ extent. Discrepancies in the village list published in the draft and information submitted by the State was observed. In addition, the proposal has not proposed the Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee and clarification to these were sought from the State Government from time to time. Other requisite documents/information such as shapefile/kml file, gazette notification of the protected area and public consultation report was also to be submitted by the State Government.

3. The representative of the State Government informed to the Committee that the State Government is revising the proposal and shall submit the revised proposal to the Ministry soon. It was therefore requested by the State Government representative that the proposal be deferred.

4. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee deferred the proposal for re-consideration at a later stage once revised proposal is made available.*

Item No.3.8: Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan.

The Government of Rajasthan vide letter dated 16.08.2021 requested for seeking deferment on the ground that the State is considering to declare this Wildlife sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve.

2. *Consideration of the proposal was therefore deferred on the request of the State Government.*

Item No. 3.9: Sariska Tiger Reserve (Sariska National Park and Sariska Sanctuary), Rajasthan.

The representative of the State Government informed the Committee that the response to the public comments received on the proposal have been submitted to the Competent Authority in the State for considerations and the reply in this regards will be submitted shortly to the Ministry. It was therefore requested that additional time may be given for submission of the observations made by the Committee in the last meeting.

2. The committee also observed that there are pending proposals of ESZs around Shergarh WLS and Phulwari ki Nal WLS, which are still awaited. In addition, information/clarifications sought in respect of Kumbhalgarh WLS and Ranthambore Tiger Reserve are still awaited. To this the State Government representative responded that the proposals are at different stages of approvals in the State and will be submitted shortly.

3. *Based on the deliberations held the proposal was deferred for consideration at a later stage once complete information is received.*

Item No.3.10: Bor Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Bor Tiger Reserve was published on 05th February, 2021, for seeking public comments. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA	:	138.11 sq km
Proposed ESZ area	:	678.14 sq km
Proposed Extent	:	0.5 km to 26.50 kms

2. This draft notification was earlier discussed in the 46th Meeting of the Committee, wherein, the Committee had noted that there are representations received on the draft notification but response of the State Government to these representations have not been received. To this the representative of the State Government had replied that response of the State Government on the comments will be furnished as soon as possible. The Committee had also noted that the concurrence of the NTCA is not available, which is ideally desired as the ESZ is proposed around a Tiger Reserve. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee in the 46th Meeting had decided to defer the proposal for reconsideration in the next meeting once the response to the stakeholder's views on the draft notification and concurrence of NTCA is available.*

3. The representative of the NTCA stated before the Committee that the NTCA is okay with the instant proposal and the Authority has already concurred to the ESZ proposal. The Committee also noted that copy of notification of the Protected Area and

kml/shape files of the Protected Area and the ESZ boundary have been submitted by the State Government. The Committee also noted that response on public comments/representations received on the proposal have been duly submitted by the State Government. The State Government accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification.

4. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for the finalisation of the draft ESZ notification.*

Item No. 3.11: Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, Maharashtra.

PCCF (Wildlife), Government of Maharashtra made a presentation and informed that the draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary was first notified on 6th November, 2019 but was again re-notified on on 30th April 2021, based on revised proposal submitted by the State Government. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 16.90 sq.km
Proposed ESZ Area: 48.32 sq.km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 3.89 km

[Zero extent at few stretches of the Eco-sensitive Zone for Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary is due to its location being at the intersection of the highly urbanized areas of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai and being close to another major city viz. Thane]

2. It was informed that the first draft notified on 06.11.2019 was discussed in the 39th Meeting of the Committee held on 04.02.2020, and in the said meeting the comments/objections, received from the stakeholders/public were duly discussed. The representative of the State Government had also stated that the Sanctuary is located in the middle of the highly urbanized area of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai and is very close to Thane city and therefore the zero extent of ESZ on these side were justified by the representative of the State Government. It was also stated that the ESZ extent towards southern side of the Sanctuary borders the Vashi Bridge and further south are more developed commercial part of Thane Creek and therefore does not add any ecological value to the Sanctuary. It was also stated that immediately north of the Sanctuary limit, the urban sprawl of Mumbai and Thane begins, which limits the scope of extending ESZ beyond the Sanctuary boundary.

3. The Committee in the said 39th Meeting had suggested that the forest area adjoining the Sanctuary may be included in the ESZ. The State Government to this had

stated that the forest area is already protected under Forest and Wildlife Acts and need not to be included in the proposed Eco-Sensitive Zone. The Committee however suggested that inclusion of such forest area in the Eco-Sensitive Zone can help better protection of the area and fortification in legal standpoint. The State Government had agreed to explore the possibility of including such forest area in proposed ESZ.

4. The State Government in the said 39th meeting had further requested for correction of errors observed in the geo-coordinates and the maps of the draft Notification. Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee in the 39th Meeting had decided that the State Government shall explore the possibility of including the forest area in the ESZ. The State Government was also advised to revise the proposal for early consideration in the next meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ.

5. A revised proposal was received and the draft was republished vide S.O.1719(E), dated 08.04.2021. A presentation was made by the representative of the Government of Maharashtra.

6. The Committee noted the revision made in the draft republished on 08.04.2021 and observed that the Eco-sensitive Zone Area now stands as 48.305 sq.km instead of 48.32 sq.km. The Committee also noted that the proposed Eco-sensitive Zone boundary extends to the limit of mangroves on the western side of the Sanctuary and the entire width of the Thane Creek and adjoining Navi Mumbai Mangrove area on the Eastern side. On the southern side, the boundary of the Sanctuary borders the Sion Panvel Highway instead of Vashi Bridge and further south is the commercial part of the Thane Creek, which does not add any value to the Sanctuary. On the northern side, the Eco- sensitive Zone is limited to 2.2 kms. The Committee also noted the inclusion of other Departments in the formulation of proposed Zonal Master Plan. Maintenance of Holding Ponds under regulated activity has been agreed by the Committee. The Committee further noted that response on public comments/representations received on the proposal have been duly submitted by the State Government. The State Government have accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification with an area of 48.305 km².

7. *Based on the presentation made and deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification.*

Item No.3.12: Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park, Andaman & Nicobar Island

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park was published on 24th December, 2020 for seeking public comments and was placed for consideration in the 46th Meeting of the Committee held on 25th June, 2021 due to technical issues.

APCCF and CWLW, Union territory administration of Andaman & Nicobar Islands made a presentation and it was informed that National Park provides ideal habitat for variety of endemic and threatened species. The important species of marine fauna includes Dugong, Dolphin, Sea turtles, salt water Crocodiles, various species of Corals, Sea cucumbers, sea shells etc. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA	:	281.5 sq.km
Proposed ESZ Area:		4.05 sq.km
Proposed Extent	:	0 to 100 m

[Zero extent is proposed at places of where the boundary of the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park adjoins with the boundary of the revenue villages and at some places the boundary ends in the sea front]

2. The Committee deliberated the proposal and observed that the possibility of extending the ESZ from 'zero' extent at areas feasible. To this, the representative of the Union territory administration stated that in certain areas there are oil exploration potential. Geographically, the UT area has 89.93 % of it under notified forest cover and 4.79% under water bodies, coastal land and mudflats. In addition, about 1.9% of area is under deemed forests. That effectively only 6.31 % of land is available in the UT for meeting the aspirational needs of local people.

3. The Committee however decided that the Union territory administration shall re-examine possibility of extending ESZ, in particular in the sea area, and in case it is absolutely not feasible a sound justification may be submitted.

4. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee deferred the proposal.*

Item No.3.13: Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 5th January, 2021, for seeking public comments. The proposal was considered in the 46th Meeting of the Committee held on 25th June, 2021, wherein, the Committee had observed that there were representations received on the

draft notification but response of the State Government to these representations was not available and therefore the item was deferred for reconsideration at a later stage once these are made available.

2. On receipt of the response of the State Government, the item was relisted and the representative of the State Government made a presentation. It was informed that the sanctuary functions as a catchment area for two major rivers of North Gujarat viz. Banas and Sabarmati. The sanctuary is a habitat for sloth bear, leopard, rattle, pangolin etc. and a total of 133 villages are falling under the proposed ESZ. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 544.78 sq. km
Proposed ESZ Area: 282.18 sq. km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 3.519 km

[Zero extent of ESZ is due to the fact that the sanctuary boundary borders the State of Rajasthan]

3. The Committee noted that the State have recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted. It was also noted that the representations/comments received have been duly considered by the State and the State Government have accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification. The Committee also noted that copy of notification for the Protected Area (PA) and kml/shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government.

4. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for the finalisation of the draft notification.*

Item No.3.14: Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu and Kashmir.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary was first notified on 20th July, 2017. However, its validity lapsed due to non-submission of revised proposal by the State Government. The draft was re-notified on 12th January, 2021 on receipt of revised proposal from the State Government. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 97.82 sq. km
Proposed ESZ area: 72.42 sq. km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 3.459 km

[Zero extent of the Eco-sensitive zone is due to contiguous border with Nandani Wildlife Sanctuary on the Western side of the Surinsar-Mansar wildlife sanctuary]

2. The draft notification was considered in the 46th Meeting of the Committee held on 25.06.2021, wherein, the Committee was informed that there are no representations received on the draft notification by the Ministry. The representative of the State Government had however, in the said meeting, desired that they will place the draft notification in their website for comments of local stakeholders before a final decision is taken and therefore requested for deferring consideration for finalisation. It was also requested that the item may be considered in the next meeting.

3. The State Government thereafter informed that they have placed the draft notification in their website as well but no response from local stakeholders were received.

4. The Committee noted that the State had recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted. It was also noted that copy of notification for the Protected Area (PA) and kml/shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government.

5. *Based on the deliberations held, the proposal was recommended for the finalisation of the draft notification.*

Item No.3.15: Tata Kutti Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu and Kashmir.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Kishtewar National Park was published on 28th January, 2021, for seeking public comments. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 116.70 sq. km
Proposed ESZ area: 67.456sq. km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 3.98 km

[zero extent of the Eco-sensitive zone is due to contiguous border with Hirpora Wildlife sanctuary towards the Eastern side and Kulian Conservation Reserve towards North-Western side of the Wildlife Sanctuary]

2. The draft notification was considered in the 46th Meeting of the Committee held on 25.06.2021, wherein, the Committee was informed that there are no representations received on the draft notification by the Ministry. The representative of the State Government had however, in the said meeting, desired that they will place the draft notification in their website for comments of local stakeholders before a final decision is taken and therefore requested for deferring consideration for finalisation. It was also requested that the item may be considered in the next meeting.

3. The State Government thereafter informed that they have placed the draft notification in their website as well but no response from local stakeholders were received. It was also noted that copy of notification for the Protected Area (PA) and kml/shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government.

4. The Committee observed that on the area adjoining Kherra Conservation Reserve seem feasible to be included within ESZ. The Committee therefore requested that the State Government shall explore the possibility of its inclusion and revise the proposal accordingly. The Committee further suggested that in case such a possibility does not arise, appropriate justification shall be submitted in this regard.

5. Based on the deliberations held the matter was deferred for reconsideration at a later stage

Item No.3.16: Kazinag National Park, Limber Wildlife Sanctuary and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Regional Wildlife Warden, Government of Jammu & Kashmir made a presentation and informed that the draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Kazinag National Park, Limber Wildlife Sanctuary and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 8th June, 2021 for seeking public comments. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA	:	181 sq. Km
Proposed ESZ Area:		69.97 km
Proposed Extent	:	0 to 5 km

[Zero extent of the Eco-sensitive zone towards West and North-West direction is due to presence of actual Line of Control and also due to human settlements]

2. It was informed that these three Protected Areas i.e Kazinag National Park, Limber Wildlife Sanctuary and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuary are spread over an area of 181 sq.km in Jammu Province. The Kazinag National Park derives its name from the Kazinag spring. The Kazinag range also forms the Line of Control between India and Pakistan. The Kazinag spring and Satkohl Nag provides water to Kehmil, Puhru, Mawar and Talar rivers. The total area of the National Park is 89 km². *The Kazinag National Park was formed by adding higher elevations of the three existing protected areas of Lachipora WLS, Limber WLS and Naganari conservation Area, after being amalgamated into a single unit.* Kazinag National Park is amongst the last refuges of the markhor (*Capra falconeri*), a globally threatened wild goat. The National park inhabits unique and diverse faunal diversities like the goral and the red junglefowl and Kalij.

3. It was also informed that the Limber Wildlife Sanctuary falls in the North-West Himalaya province of Himalayan zone and is home to around 20 species of mammals, including some rare, threatened, endangered species. It is spread over an area of 18.54 km². The Limber Wildlife Sanctuary shown varied vegetation types determined according to the habitat, form and density of dominant floral species. The area is a home to highly endangered Kazi-nag Markhor. The area is rich in Pheasants namely Western tragapon, Koklas and Mional.

4. It was further informed that the Kachipora Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Baramulla District. The total area of the Sanctuary is 27.77km². Being very close to the Line of Control, some areas, especially towards to the west (Lachipora) movements are restricted. The Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuary represents the Himalayan dry temperate and Himalayan moist temperate forests of the western Himalaya and contains a rich and important assemblage of threatened and important animals, some of which are localized in their distribution. *Kazinag, Lachipora and Limber Landscape is now considered the last hope for the markhor (*Capra falconeri*) of which, the bulk of the population occurs here.* The topography is mountainous with sloped of moderate to steep gradient broken by rocky cliff. The Sanctuary has an altitudinal range of 1946 to 4212 MSL.

5. *The representative of the State Government stated that a combined proposal is proposed as an effort to make all the three important wildlife areas as a single unit, helping thereby, easy gene flow across the landscape and allowing biodiversity to flourish.* Accordingly, the proposal prohibits certain industries or class of industries and their operations and processes in the said Eco-Sensitive Zone. *It was further stated that the zero extent of the Eco-sensitive zone towards West and North- West direction is due to presence of actual Line of control.*

6. The Committee noted that copy of notification for the PA, response on public representation and kml / shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government. The Committee noted that the State had recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted. The Committee further noted that copy of notification for the Protected Area (PA) and kml /shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government.

7. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalisation of the draft notification.*

Item No.3.17: Dachigam National Park, Thajwas (Baltal) Wildlife Sanctuary and Overa Aru Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu and Kashmir

The representatives of the State Government made a presentation and informed that the draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Dachigam National Park, Thajwas (Baltal) Wildlife Sanctuary and Overa Aru Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 8th June, 2021, for seeking public comments. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 769 sq.km
Proposed ESZ Area: 137.75 km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 9.90 km

[Zero extent of the Eco-Sensitive Zone towards South and SouthWest side of Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary is due to the fact that the Eco-Sensitive Zone boundary passes along the important tourist destination of Pahalgam and Nunwan Camp and the base camp of the famous annual pilgrimage Amarnath Yatra. Further, the Pahalgam area is under high demand for tourist infrastructural development and is notified under the Development Act as the local area for Pahalgam Development Authority. The area has also sizeable resident population and infrastructures developed]

2. It was informed that these three Protected Areas viz. Dachigam National Park, Thajwas WLS and Overa Aru WLS are spread over an area of 769 sq.kms. Dachigam National Park lies in the western region of Greater Himalayan Range and mountain ranges of the park are a part of the Great Zanskar Range and is spread in an area of 141 sq.km. The National Park occupies almost half of the catchment zone of the famous Dal lake. The only place in the world harbouring last viable population of Hangul. It is home to highest density of Black Bear in Asia and forms the source of water supply to large part of Srinagar. There are no villages or permanent settlements inside the

National Park. It is also Bird watchers Paradise, with more than 130 species of birds reported. It is also the lungs of Srinagar City and an eco- tourist destination.

3. It was also informed that Thajwas WLS is spread over an area of 203 sq.km and is the Eco-tone of Greater Himalayas and Trans-Himalayas and is potential home to snow leopard in the Kashmir valley. It forms the catchment of the Sindh River and hosts famous tourist destinations such as Sonamarg and the Thajwas glacier. It is an important place for pilgrims of the Amarnath Shrine and is the gate way to UT of Ladakh through the Zojila Pass.

4. It was further informed that Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary derived its name from two hamlets of Overa-Aru and is spread over an area of 425 sq.km. The lap the sanctuary abodes two famous snow melt fresh water and perennial nallahs viz. Overa and Lidder meandering through the sanctuary. It is located in contiguity to Dachigam National Park, which holds the last viable population of critically endangered Hangul. It provides important and safe corridor for free ranging animals like Hangul, Asiatic black bear, Leopards etc. It also provided a natural habitat for a number of threatened and endangered species. It is known for its unique and highly diverse type of fauna and flora. The faunal, floral, ecological and geomorphologic significance together with proximity to famous tourist resort Pahalgam is adding splendour shine to the glory.

5. *The representative of the State Government stated that a combined proposal is proposed as an effort to make all the three important wildlife areas as a single unit, helping thereby, easy gene flow across the landscape and allowing biodiversity to flourish. Accordingly, the proposal prohibits certain industries or class of industries and their operations and processes in the said Eco-Sensitive Zone. It was further stated that the zero extent of the Eco-sensitive zone towards South and South east of Overa-Aru WLS as it passes along important tourist destination of Pahalgam and Nunwan Base camp of the Holy Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage.*

6. Representative of the State Government stated that Pahalgam is perpetually under high demand for tourism activity and the demand for infrastructure need are high. That approved Master Plan for Pahalgam is already under implementation and the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu and Kashmir is monitoring implementation of the Master Plan. *It was also informed that no representations have been received on the draft notification.*

7. The Committee noted that high altitude area can also be kept within the ESZ and the proposal has not taken this into consideration. The Committee also noted that on the Southern side a Sanctuary is being proposed but this has been excluded from ESZ.

The Committee therefore suggested that the State Government shall revisit the proposal and revision carried out as may be necessary.

8. *Based on the deliberations held, the committee suggested for re-consideration at a later stage once the clarification/revision as stated in para above are furnished.*

Item No.3.18: Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu and Kashmir

The representative of the State Government made a presentation and informed that the draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 8th June, 2021, for seeking public comments. The salient features of the Eco-Sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 180 sq. Km
Proposed ESZ Area: 62.2 km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 4.1 km

[Zero extent of Eco-sensitive Zone in some directions is proposed as the areas have tourist potential and the population living around the Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary mainly are dependent on tourist activities. If the entire area is included within the Eco-sensitive Zone, then livelihood of the villagers will be directly affected]

2. The Committee observed that the zero extent of ESZ on the ground purely that the area has tourist potential and habitations around Gulmarg WLS are dependent on tourist activities is not appropriate. The Committee therefore agreed that if there are geographical attributes of the area then justification of zero extent has a point but purely on the fact that the entire area adjoins Jammu and therefore zero extent ESZ is not acceptable. The Committee therefore decided that the State Government shall re-examine the ESZ zero extent and submit a revised ESZ extent along with necessary maps delineating ESZ boundary and areas.

3. *Based on the deliberations held, the proposal was deferred for consideration at a later stage once the revision is made as may be feasible.*

Item No.3.19: Tundah Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Tundah Wildlife Sanctuary was first notified on 3rd June, 2016 but its period of validity for finalisation got expired due to non-submission of requisite information by the State Government. The draft was

re-notified on 12th March, 2021 on receipt of revised proposal from the State Government.

The proposal was earlier considered in the 46th ECM held on 25th June 2021 and the representative of the State Government made a presentation. It was stated in the said meeting that the salient features of the draft Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA: 64 sq. Km
Proposed ESZ area: 46.74 sq. km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 1 km

[Zero extent towards Northern and North Eastern side is due to presence of district boundary of Lahul and Spiti exhibiting snow bound mountains with glaciers and inaccessible terrains]

2. The representative of the State Government informed that the Committee in the said meeting that since northern and north eastern side of the Protected Area exhibit snow bound mountain with glaciers and inaccessible terrain, no ESZ is proposed on these sides. It was also informed that copy of the notification for Protected Area and kml/shape file of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been submitted by the State Government.

3. The Committee however observed that there are several representations received against the draft ESZ notification and response of the State Government is not available. The Committee therefore had decided that the proposal due may be deferred for reconsideration at a later stage once the response is received from the State Government. On receipt of the response of the State Government to the comments of stakeholders/representations the matter was again placed for reconsideration of the Committee.

4. The Committee noted that the State had recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted and the State Government have accordingly recommended finalization of the draft notification. The Committee also noted that copy of notification for the PA, kml / shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary and point-wise response on the representation of Conservation Action Trust have been duly submitted by the State Government.

5. *Based on the deliberations held the Committee recommended for finalisation of the draft notification.*

Item No.3.20: Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh.

The draft notification for declaration of ESZ around Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary was first notified on 22nd December, 2015. However, its validity got expired due to non-submission of requisite information by the State Government. On receipt of revised proposal from the State Government, the draft was re-notified on 8th June, 2021, for inviting stakeholders/public comments. The salient features of the draft Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 982.86 sq. Km

Proposed ESZ Area: 32.635 sq. km

Proposed Extent: 0 (zero) to 1 km

[Zero extent at various stretches of the ESZ boundary are on account of the reasons as follows: (i) Southern boundary of the Sanctuary touches the Nargu Wildlife Sanctuary in Mandi District; (ii) South-East, East and North-East boundary of the Sanctuary touches Kullu District having steep slopes and permanent glaciers; (iii) North, North-East boundary of the Sanctuary touches Lahul & Spiti District, with very steep slopes and permanent glaciers; (iv) North-West boundary of the Sanctuary touches the Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary in Chamba District; and (v) Western side of the Sanctuary touches Chamba District but has very steep slopes and permanent Glaciers]

2. PCCF (WL), Government of Himachal Pradesh along with APCCF (WL) and DFO (WL), Kullu were present. The Committee noted that the proposal has been duly endorsed by the Wildlife Division and the justification for zero extent due to geographical location in this case seem valid. The Committee also noted that copy of notification for the PA, response on public representation (in tabular form) and kml / shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary and have been duly submitted by the State Government. The Committee further noted that the State had recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted.

3. *Based on the deliberations held the proposal was recommended for the finalisation.*

Item No. 3.21: Gamgul Siyabeh Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh

The draft ESZ notification for declaration of ESZ around Gamgul Siyabeh Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 03rd June, 2016, but its validity got expired due to non-submission of requisite information by the State Government. The draft was re-notified

on receipt of revised proposal from the State Government on 27th October, 2020 for inviting stakeholder's/public comments. The proposal was considered in 44th Meeting of the Committee wherein, the Committee had observed that the extent of ESZ in the 1st draft published on 3.6.2016 was upto 3.3 kms, whereas, in the re-notified draft, the ESZ extent has been revised to 1.0 km, even though the ESZ area has been kept same. The Committee desired that the possibility for retaining upto 3.3 km ESZ extent may be examined. On submission of the clarification/justification by the State Government vide its letter dated 29.06.2021, the item is placed for consideration.

2. PCCF (WL), Government of Himachal Pradesh along with APCCF (WL) and DFO (WL), Kullu were present and a presentation was made by the State Government representatives. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA: 108.40 sq.km

Proposed ESZ Area: 28.90 sq.km

Proposed Extent: 0 to 3.3 km

[Zero extent is due to the fact that the boundary of the WLS is co-terminus with the State boundary of J&K on the North Eastern and North Western sides]

3. The representatives of the State Government informed that the extent of ESZ mentioned in the re-notified draft published on 27.10.2020 i.e. 0 to 1.0 km is due to a clerical error and may be read as 0 to 3.3 km. It was also stated that there is no change in the map, boundaries and area of the ESZ.

4. The Committee noted that copy of notification for the PA, response on public representation and kml/shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government. The Committee also noted that the proposal has been duly endorsed by the Wildlife Division and the justification for zero extent due to geographical location in this case seem valid. The Committee also noted that the State had recommended that the proposal being in order may be accepted.

5. *Based on the deliberations held the proposal was recommended for the finalisation.*

Item No. 3.22: Nargu Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh

The draft ESZ notification for declaration of ESZ around Nargu Wildlife Sanctuary was notified on 24th February 2016, but its validity lapsed due to non-submission of requisite information by the State Government. The draft was re-notified on 11th

November, 2020 for inviting stakeholders/public comments. The proposal was earlier considered in 44th Meeting of the Committee, wherein, the Committee had observed that the extent of ESZ has been kept at zero on the side adjoining Dhouladhar Wildlife Sanctuary and also on the side of the Parvati Protected Forest. The Committee had further observed that there could be no zero extent ESZ on the side adjoining Parvati Protected Forest and requested the State Government to re-examine the same.

2. The State Government vide its letter No.WLM/ESZ/Vol.X/8763, dated 02.03.2021 clarified that on the Palampur and Parvati Forest Divisions, the ESZ area already proposed and is not zero extent.

3. PCCF (WL), Government of Himachal Pradesh along with APCCF (WL) and DFO (WL), Kullu were present and a presentation was made by the State Government representatives. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 132.37 sq.km
Proposed ESZ Area: 50.0425 sq.km
Proposed Extent : 0 to 1 km

[zero extent of eco sensitive zone is due to continuation of the Nargu wild life sanctuary with Dhauladhar wildlife Sanctuary towards northern side and Khokhan Wildlife Sanctuary on the south eastern side.]

3. The Committee noted that the proposal has been duly endorsed by the Wildlife Division and the justification for zero extent due to geographical location in this case seem valid. The Committee also noted that copy of notification for the PA, response on public representation and kml / shape files of the PA and the ESZ boundary have been duly submitted by the State Government. The State Government has recommended finalisation of the draft notification.

4. The Committee also deliberated the pending proposals of ESZ from the State and requested that proposals/clarifications in respect of Pin Valley WLS, Pong Dam WLS, Chandertal WLS, Kibber WLS, Bandli WLS, Great Himalayan National Park and Shikari Devi WLS may be expedited.

5. *Based on the deliberations held, the instant proposal was recommended for the finalisation.*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members of the Expert Committee

1. Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Chairperson, MoEF&CC.
2. Dr. S. C. Garkoti, Adviser, ESZ-Division, MoEF&CC.
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8. Shri Hemant Singh, AIGF, NTCA, New Delhi.
9. Shri. Amit Mittal, EM Directorate CWC Delhi
10. Shri. Surender Gugloth, Scientist-'D', Wildlife Division, MoEF&CC.
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17. The APCCF (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Rajasthan.
18. Shri. S. P. Singh CF (Wildlife) Jaipur, Government of Rajasthan.
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23. The ACS, Forest & Environment Department, Government of Gujarat.

24. The PCCF & CWLW, Government of Gujarat.

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