

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB

Bill No. 05 of 2025

THE PUNJAB PROTECTED AREAS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2025

A

Bill

further to amend the Punjab Protected Areas Act 2020.

It is necessary further to amend the Punjab Protected Areas Act 2020 (XXIII of 2020) 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 Protected Areas (Amendment) Act 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 2 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Punjab Protected Areas Act 2020 (XXIII of 2020), for brevity referred to as 'the Act', in section 2:

(a) in sub-section (1):

(i) for clause (c), the following shall be substituted:

“(c) “Board” means the Board established under section 5 of the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974 (II of 1974);”;

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

“(da) “ecotourism” means the ecotourism as provided under section 3A of the Act;”;

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

“(ja) “officer” means an officer as defined under clause (k) of section 2 of the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974 (II of 1974);” and

(b) after sub-section (1), the following shall be added:

“(2) A word or an expression used but not defined in this Act or rules or regulations made thereunder, shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act 1974 (II of 1974).”.

3. Insertion of section 3A in Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, after section 3, the following shall be inserted:

“3A. Ecotourism.- The responsible and sustainable ecotourism shall be that:

(a) conserves and protects natural and cultural heritage of the area, including wildlife and their habitats or

associate habitats;

- (b) educates and raises awareness among tourists and local communities about importance of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
- (c) supports and benefits local communities, promoting their economic development and cultural heritage;
- (d) minimizes environmental impact through low-impact activities, sustainable infrastructure, and responsible waste management;
- (e) promotes scientific research and monitoring, contributing to conservation and management of protected areas; and
- (f) ensures safety and well-being of tourists, local communities and wildlife.”.

4. Omission of section 4 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, section 4 shall be omitted.

5. Amendment of section 5 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, in clause (c), after the words “a protected area”, the words “and promotion of ecotourism” shall be inserted.

6. Amendment of section 17 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, in section 17, for the words “Administrative Department”, the words “Director General, Wildlife and Parks” shall be substituted.

7. Amendment of section 20 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, in section 20, in sub-section (1), for the word “Government”, the words “Director General, Wildlife and Parks” shall be substituted.

8. Amendment of section 26 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, in section 26, in sub-section (1), for the word “three”, the word “five” shall be substituted and after the words “such contravention”, the words “and in case of default of payment of fine, offender shall undergo further imprisonment for a minimum period of six months” shall be added.

9. Amendment of section 27 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, for section 27, the following shall be substituted:

“27. Cognizance of offences and trial.- The offences under sections 7 to 13 of this Act shall be cognizable, non-bailable and triable by such court, in such manner and by such officers as provided in the Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act, 1974.”.

10. Omission of section 28 of Act XXIII of 2020.- In the Act, the section 28 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 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 or 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