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NBA Issues Standard Procedure for Notifying Threatened Species

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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WHY IN NEWS

On June 26, 2026, the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** released a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) under **Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002** (<https://ujyari.com/terms/biological-diversity-act/>), giving States and Union Territories a uniform, scientific process to identify, assess and notify threatened species.

UNDERSTANDING SECTION 38

Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, empowers the **Central Government, in consultation with the concerned State Government**, to notify any species that is on the verge of extinction or is likely to become extinct as a **Threatened Species**. The notification allows the government to **regulate or prohibit the collection** of such species and to provide measures for their **rehabilitation** (<https://ujyari.com/vocab/rehabilitation/>) and conservation.

Until now, States lacked a uniform, transparent method to recommend species for notification. The new SOP fills this gap.

WHAT THE SOP PROVIDES

The SOP creates a standard, transparent and science-based pathway for proposing and notifying threatened species. It draws on the best available scientific evidence, field-based assessments and traditional knowledge, while ensuring the participation of local communities.

BODY	ROLE IN THE PROCESS
Botanical Survey of India (BSI)	Scientific assessment of plant species
Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)	Scientific assessment of animal species
Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)	Local-level documentation, People's Biodiversity Registers, community input
State Biodiversity Boards	State-level coordination and recommendation
NBA	National-level vetting and recommendation to the Centre
Academic institutions and subject experts	Specialised technical review

Current Status

So far, about **159 plant species and 173 animal species** have been notified as threatened across **17 States and 3 Union Territories**.

THE NBA AND THE THREE-TIER STRUCTURE

The NBA is a **statutory** (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/statutory/>) and **autonomous body** established in **2003** under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. It is headquartered in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.

The Act provides for a three-tier institutional structure:

TIER	BODY	LEVEL
National	National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)	Centre
State	State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs)	States and UTs
Local	Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)	Local bodies

These institutions also handle access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for biological resources and associated traditional knowledge.

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

A uniform SOP brings consistency, scientific rigour and transparency to a previously ad hoc process, and it strengthens **cooperative federalism** (<https://ujivari.com/terms/cooperative-federalism/>) by clearly mapping the roles of the Centre, States and local committees. By weaving in traditional knowledge and BMCs, it aligns conservation with the participation of local communities, who are often the primary custodians of biodiversity.

The way forward involves capacity-building for BMCs and State Biodiversity Boards, regular updation of species assessments using BSI and ZSI data, integration with the IUCN Red List criteria, and adequate funding so that notification is followed by genuine on-ground recovery plans rather than remaining a paper exercise.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3 (Environment and Ecology): Conservation, biodiversity governance, statutory bodies, Biological Diversity Act framework.

Prelims pointers:

- NBA: statutory, autonomous body; established 2003; headquartered in Chennai; under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- Section 38: empowers the Centre, with the State, to notify threatened species and regulate their collection.
- Three-tier structure: NBA (national), State Biodiversity Boards (state), BMCs (local).
- BSI and ZSI provide scientific assessment of plants and animals respectively.

Mains question: “A uniform process for notifying threatened species can strengthen India’s biodiversity governance only if it empowers local institutions.” Critically examine. (15 marks, 250 words)

FACTS CORNER

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NBA: National Biodiversity Authority, a statutory autonomous body set up in 2003 under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; headquartered in Chennai.

Section 38: Lets the Central Government, with the State, notify species on the verge of extinction and regulate or prohibit their collection.

SOP (June 2026): A uniform, science-based procedure for States and UTs to identify, assess and notify threatened species.

Data: About 159 plant and 173 animal species notified across 17 States and 3 UTs.

Three-tier structure: NBA (national), State Biodiversity Boards (state), Biodiversity Management Committees (local).

Scientific backbone: Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).

Sources: National Biodiversity Authority (<http://nbaindia.org>), PIB (<https://pib.gov.in>), Prokerala (<https://www.prokerala.com>)

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Underground layer of permeable rock, sediment, or soil that stores and...

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