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Biodiversity & Conservation:

On August 20, 2025, a key development in biodiversity and conservation is the preparation for the upcoming 20th Conference of the Parties (CoP) of CITES in Uzbekistan. This meeting, scheduled for late November, will see representatives from 185 countries discuss over 50 proposals to regulate wildlife trade.

Key Developments

CITES CoP 20: This is a critical conference for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The U.S. has sponsored the lowest number of proposals in 25 years, with none of them aiming to increase protections for at-risk species. Instead, some proposals seek to downgrade protection for species like the Guadalupe fur seal and peregrine falcon. The conference will address the fate of many species, including sharks, African hornbills, hyenas, and vultures.

High Seas Treaty: The Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), also known as the High Seas Treaty, is nearing entry into force. The UN Ocean Conference in June saw 19 additional countries ratify the treaty, bringing the total number to 50. It will become legally binding after 60 countries have ratified it. This treaty aims to protect marine life in areas outside national jurisdiction, which constitute nearly two-thirds of the world's oceans.

Sundarbans Tiger Reserve: A major conservation win in India is the expansion of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve. The government has approved the addition of 1,044 sq km from the South 24 Parganas forest division. This makes it the second-largest tiger reserve in India, a move expected to significantly boost tiger conservation efforts and central funding.

Indigenous Knowledge: Conservation efforts are increasingly recognizing the crucial role of Indigenous peoples. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is highlighting how Indigenous knowledge protects nature, including in the context of AI and its potential for both good and harm in conservation.

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d) 20

Answer: c) 19

The news reports, "The UN Ocean Conference in June saw 19 additional countries ratify the treaty, bringing the total number to 50."

3. What is the total number of countries that need to ratify the High Seas Treaty for it to become legally binding?

- a) 50
- b) 60
- c) 70
- d) 80

Answer: b) 60

The news explicitly states that the treaty "will become legally binding after 60 countries have ratified it."

4. What is the newly expanded area of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve in India?

- a) 544 sq km
- b) 844 sq km
- c) 1,044 sq km
- d) 1,244 sq km

Answer: c) 1,044 sq km

The news mentions that the government approved "the addition of 1,044 sq km from the South 24 Parganas forest division" to the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve.

5. Which of the following is highlighted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as being crucial for protecting nature?

- a) Artificial intelligence
- b) Indigenous knowledge
- c) Satellite technology
- d) Genetic engineering

Answer: b) Indigenous knowledge

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MCQS

1. Where is the upcoming 20th Conference of the Parties (CoP) of CITES scheduled to be held?

- a) Uzbekistan
- b) India
- c) Australia
- d) United States

Answer: a) Uzbekistan

The news states, "a key development in biodiversity and conservation is the preparation for the upcoming 20th Conference of the Parties (CoP) of CITES in Uzbekistan."

2. How many additional countries ratified the High Seas Treaty at the UN Ocean Conference in June, bringing the total to 50?

- a) 10
- b) 15
- c) 19





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