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Biodiversity & Conservation:

The High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement)

The Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) reached its required threshold of 60 ratifications on September 19, 2025. This allows it to enter into force 120 days later, on January 17, 2026. The treaty, the result of nearly two decades of negotiations, provides a legal framework to protect the high seas, which cover nearly two-thirds of the world's oceans.

The BBNJ Agreement's key provisions include:

Establishing **marine protected areas (MPAs)** on the high seas.

Conducting **environmental impact assessments** for activities in these areas.

Promoting the **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** from marine genetic resources.

Facilitating **capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology** to developing nations.

This is a significant step toward achieving the "30x30" goal of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to conserve at least 30% of the world's land and sea by 2030.

Other Developments

Goa, India: The Chief Minister of Goa, Dr. Pramod Sawant, emphasized the importance of conserving the state's natural water bodies and biodiversity. He spoke at a session on the "Mission Sarovar Punha Nirman: Reimagining Goa's Lake" initiative, which aims to rejuvenate 39 lakes.

European Wolves: Following a European Parliament vote, the protection status of wolves across Europe has been downgraded from "strictly protected" to "protected." This change, driven by a 58% increase in the wolf population over the past decade, grants member states more flexibility in managing wolf populations. Experts caution that this shift highlights the need for adaptive and transparent wildlife management frameworks to ensure continued species recovery.

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assessments, which were previously difficult to enforce in these regions.

2: The ratification of the High Seas Treaty is considered a significant step toward achieving which goal of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

- A. Halting all biodiversity loss by 2025.
- B. Conserving at least 30% of the world's land and sea by 2030.
- C. Restoring all degraded ecosystems by 2040.
- D. Eliminating all invasive alien species by 2050.

Answer: B. Conserving at least 30% of the world's land and sea by 2030.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, often referred to as the "30x30" goal, aims to protect a significant portion of the planet's ecosystems. By providing a mechanism to create marine protected areas on the high seas, the BBNJ Agreement directly contributes to reaching this ambitious target for ocean conservation.

MCQS

1: What is the primary purpose of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement) that reached the 60-ratification threshold?

- A. To ban all fishing in international waters.
- B. To regulate seabed mining exclusively.
- C. To provide a legal framework for conserving marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- D. To establish military-free zones in the ocean.

Answer: C. To provide a legal framework for conserving marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The BBNJ Agreement, also known as the High Seas Treaty, is a landmark agreement designed to protect the vast areas of the ocean that lie outside of any single country's control. Its goal is to create a legal framework for conservation efforts like establishing marine protected areas and conducting environmental impact

3: What is the "Mission Sarovar Punha Nirman: Reimagining Goa's Lake" initiative aimed at?

- A. Building new reservoirs for drinking water.
- B. Rejuvenating lakes and other natural water bodies.
- C. Promoting water sports and tourism in lakes.
- D. Constructing hydroelectric power plants on rivers.

Answer: B. Rejuvenating lakes and other natural water bodies.

The initiative's name, "Sarovar Punha Nirman," literally translates to "Lake Re-creation." This initiative, led by Goa's Chief Minister, focuses on the conservation and rejuvenation of the state's natural water bodies to protect its biodiversity and water resources.





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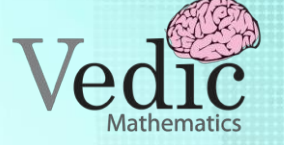
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4: The European Parliament's decision to downgrade the wolf's protection status was primarily a response to what?

- A. A decrease in the wolf population across Europe.
- B. The widespread success of conservation efforts, leading to a significant increase in the wolf population.
- C. Scientific evidence that wolves do not prey on livestock.
- D. Pressure from environmental groups to increase hunting.

Answer: B. The widespread success of conservation efforts, leading to a significant increase in the wolf population.

The protection status was downgraded from "strictly protected" to "protected" because the wolf population has grown substantially. This change was made to give individual countries more flexibility in managing their wolf populations and addressing conflicts with human activities, such as livestock attacks.



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