

SCIENCE

WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Wild life:-

Wild life refers to living beings comprising animals, plants and micro-organisms found in natural habitats which are neither domesticated/ tamed nor cultivated. While forests are wooded tracts, wildlife is the living component of forests. Of course wildlife occurs outside the forests as well. Forests have economic, protective and regulative functions.

- Term “**Flora**” is used to include all types of plants on this earth. Though this word has come from flora meaning flower but it includes non- flowering plants, even fungus plants and bacteria. Similarly, term “**Fauna**” is used to include all types of animals.

➤ Importance of Wildlife:-

- Forests and wild life maintain an ecological balance of nature.
- It provides a great biological diversity (i.e., occurrence of a large number of species in an area).
- Wild life serves as a source for domestication of animals and cultivation of crop plants. About 90% of the food plants originated from wild tropical ancestors.
- Many valuable products such as life-saving drugs, silk, lac, honey, feather, musk, ivory, fine decorative leather, etc., are obtained from wild life.

Wild Life Conservation:-

Conservation of wild life is the management of wild flora and fauna in order to save them from their extinction as well as to get sustainable benefit for both the present and the future. Several governmental organizations as well as non-governmental voluntary organizations have been set up to protect the wild life.

These organizations aim at:

1. Protection of natural habits
2. Maintenance of wild life in protected areas (Reserves)
3. Protection through legislation.

1. **Protection of natural habitats:-** Natural habitats of wild animals must be protected by Identification and safeguard of feeding, resting, breeding and nursing habitats of each species.
2. **Maintenance of wild life in protected areas:-** The wild animals are allowed to grow in number in natural habitats in protected areas through preventing poaching, maintaining habitats and their requirements. This is done by conserving the wild life in - (i) Biosphere reserves (i.e., multipurpose protected areas meant for conservation of representative wild life, traditional life style of tribals and their domesticated animals); (ii) National parks (i.e., Areas for protection of wild life maintained by the government where cultivation, grazing, hunting or other activities are not allowed); (iii) Sanctuaries (i.e., protected natural habitats where hunting is not allowed but other activities are allowed).
 - There are endangered species exposed to danger of extinction. Endemic species are more endangered. They need conservation.
 - The **International Union for conservation of Nature and Natural resources (IUCN)** has made five main conservation categories. These are extinct, endangered, vulnerable, rare and insufficiently known species. To bring the focus to threatened species, IUCN has started issuing lists of threatened plants and animals on a global basis. IUCN has also started publication of a Red data book.

Biosphere reserves are multipurpose protected areas with major objectives such as:

- (i) to conserve diversity and integrity of plants, animals and micro organisms
- (ii) to encourage ecological conservations and
- (iii) to educate, train and create awareness about environmental aspects.

Twelve biosphere reserves have been set up in the country. They are Nilgiri, Nandadevi, Nokrok, Great Nicobar, Gulf of Mannar, Mannas, Sunderbans, Similipal, Pibru Saikhowa, Oebong Oeband, Punchmarhi and Kanchanjangha.

- Biological diversity day: 29th December.