

Conservation of Plants and Animals

Wild Life

❖ CAUSES OF EXTINCTION AND DEPLETION OF WILDLIFE

1. Indiscriminate Hunting: Several species have become extinct due to their hunting by man for food, pleasure and animal products. The examples are disappearance of the bird dodo in Mauritius and the cheetah in India.

2. Destruction of Natural Habitat: Man has destroyed the natural habitats of wildlife for his settlement, cropping, plantation, mining and raising of dams, overgrazing by domestic animals, etc.

3. Introduction of Exotic Species: Man not only destroys the natural habitat, but also sometimes changes the structure of the biotic community of a place by introducing exotic species of his interest. Such species compete with the native species for food and space and may threaten the later will extinction. For example, the introduction of exotic trout and bass fish in the USA is endangering the native species of fish.

4. Forest Fires: Setting the forest on fire not only kills the useful animals but also causes large-scale destruction of the plant life.

5. Overexploitation of Natural Resources : Several animals and plants are valuable sources of food and other materials. Fish, prawns and crabs constitute an important part of human food. Man has, however, over-exploited these resources. Overfishing in sea is causing a grave situatoin and the picture is not encouraging with respect to fresh water fishing. The rate of consumption of fish is greater than its replenishment.

6. International Trade of Animal Products

7. Legal lapse : The failure of enforcement of the existing laws of wildlife management is yet another reason for the rapid depletion of wild life.

8. Human Ignorance : Man is mainly responsible for depletion and extinction of wildlife on the earth. This is largely due to ignorance of common man regarding the value of wildlife and the probable consequences of the disappearance of wildlife to man himself

PROTECTED SPECIES OF INDIAN WILDLIFE

The following wild animals have been enlisted as threatened and protected species in India.

1. Musk deer
2. Bharat Swamp Deer
3. Duck
4. Horned Pheasant
5. Monal Pheasant

6. Great Indian Bustard

7. Indian Gazelle or Chinkara

8. Pea fowl

9. Gharial

10. Marsh crocodile

11. Python

12. Leathery turtle

13. Albino snow leopard

❖ **CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE**

(i) **Ex-situ Conservation:** The protection of wild life in other than their natural habitate e.g., zoos and botanical gardens, other examples of Ex-situ conservation are –

(a) Gene banks

(b) Germ plasm bank.

(c) Seed bank.

(ii) **In situ conservation:** It is the protection of species (wild life) in their natural habitat e.g., National parks.

Wildlife can be conserved by:

(a) Preventing illegal hunting of animals.

(b) Preventing sale and export of animal products and hunting of rare and endangered animals.

(c) Setting up wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

(d) Reforestation.