

Chapter 2 - Forest and Wildlife Resources

We humans along with all living organisms form a complex web of an ecological system. Chapter 2 of Class 10 Geography starts with the introduction of flora and fauna in India. The chapter subsequently discusses the important role that forests play in the ecological system and how we can conserve forest and wildlife in India. The chapter ends by explaining various steps taken by people to conserve our forest and wildlife resources. Here we have compiled all these topics in the form of CBSE Notes Class 10 Geography Chapter 2 - Forest and Wildlife Resources. Going through these notes will help you in understanding the chapter easily.

Flora and Fauna in India

India is one of the world's richest countries in terms of its vast array of biological diversity. Different varieties of forest and wildlife resources are found in India. Based on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), we can classify different categories of existing plants and animal species as follows:

1. **Normal Species:** Species whose population levels are considered to be normal for their survival, such as cattle, sal, pine, rodents, etc.
2. **Endangered Species:** These species are in danger of extinction. For examples, species are black buck, crocodile, Indian wild ass, Indian rhino, lion tailed macaque, sangai (brow antler deer in Manipur), etc.
3. **Vulnerable Species:** These are species whose population has declined to levels that it is likely to move into the endangered category in the near future if it continues to decline in the same manner.
 1. Eg: Blue sheep, Asiatic elephant, Gangetic dolphin, etc.
4. **Rare Species:** Species with a small population may move into the endangered or vulnerable category if the negative factors affecting them continue to operate. The examples of such species are the Himalayan brown bear, wild Asiatic buffalo, desert fox and hornbill, etc.
5. **Endemic Species:** These are species which are only found in some particular areas usually isolated by natural or geographical barriers. Examples of such species are the Andaman teal, Nicobar pigeon, Andaman wild pig, Mithun in Arunachal Pradesh.
6. **Extinct Species:** These species may be extinct from a local area, region, country, continent or the entire earth.
Eg: Asiatic cheetah, pink head duck.

What are the negative factors that cause such fearful depletion of the flora and fauna?

1. Excessive consumption of natural resources for fulfilling human needs such as wood, barks, leaves, rubber, medicines, dyes, food, fuel, fodder, manure, etc.

2. The expansion of the railways, agriculture, commercial and scientific forestry and mining activities.
3. Large-scale development of projects and mining activities.
4. Unequal access, inequitable consumption of resources and differential sharing of responsibility for environmental well-being.

Conservation of Forest and Wildlife in India

Conservation preserves the ecological diversity and preserves the genetic diversity of plants and animals.

1. The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act was implemented in 1972, for protecting habitats and an all India list of protected species was published.
2. The central government also announced several projects for protecting specific animals. Under the Wildlife Act of 1980 and 1986, several hundred butterflies, moths, beetles, and one dragonfly have been added to the list of protected species.
3. In 1991, for the first time plants were also added to the list, starting with six species.

Types and Distribution of Forest and Wildlife Resources

In India, forest and wildlife resources are owned and managed by the government through the Forest Department or other government departments. These are classified under the following categories.

Reserved Forests: More than half of the total forest land in India has been declared reserved forests.

Protected Forests: Forest Department has declared one-third of the total forest area as protected forest.

Unclassed Forests: These are the forests and wastelands which belong to both government and private individuals and communities. North-eastern states and parts of Gujarat have a very high percentage of their forests as unclassified forests.

Reserved and protected forests are also referred to as **permanent forests**, which are maintained for the purpose of producing timber and other forest produce, and for protective reasons. Madhya Pradesh has the largest area under permanent forests.

Community and Conservation

Conservation of the forest and wildlife resources is very important. Here are a few steps were taken by common people:

1. In Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, villagers have fought against mining by citing the Wildlife Protection Act.

2. The inhabitants of five villages in the Alwar district of Rajasthan have declared 1,200 hectares of forest as the Bhairudev Dakav 'Sonchuri'. Villages came up with their own set of rules and regulations which do not allow hunting. They are also protecting the wildlife against any outside encroachments.
3. The famous Chipko movement in the Himalayas was one successful attempt to resist deforestation in several areas. The movement has also resulted in community afforestation.
4. Farmers and citizen's groups like the **Beej Bachao Andolan** in Tehri and Navdanya have shown that adequate levels of diversified crop production without the use of synthetic chemicals are possible and economically viable.
5. India joint forest management (JFM) programme furnishes a good example for involving local communities in the management and restoration of degraded forests.

