

# Wildlife Conservation

Like forests, wildlife is also a national resource, which not only helps in maintaining the ecological balance but is also beneficial from economic, recreational and aesthetic points of view. There was a time when human interference was minimum the number of wild animals was quite high and there was no problem of their protection or conservation. But, with the expansion of agriculture, settlement, industrial and other developmental activities and mainly due to greed of man, the number of wild animals gradually became lesser and lesser. With the result that several species of animals have become extinct and several, others are on the verge of being so.

Deforestation is also one of the main reasons for the loss of wildlife. Mass killings of wild animals for their meat, bones, fur, teeth, hair, skin, etc., are going on throughout the world. Therefore, the need for wildlife conservation has now become a necessity.

Population growth, expansion of agriculture and livestock raising building of cities and roads, and pollution are among the many pressures on the natural habitat of wildlife. Along with illegal hunting, habitat reduction and its degradation has threatened the biodiversity of the regions where these are rampant.

Preservation of wildlife does not mean a blanket protection to all faunal and floral species; rather, it implies a proper, judicious control over the multiplication of plants and animals, which interact together to provide a proper environment to man whose very existence is in peril today.

Due to the irrational use of natural and biotic resources of the earth in the past, most of the wildlife has been destroyed beyond retrieval. It is our urgent duty to protect the natural splendor of ecosystems and to evolve a system of co-existence with every living creature upon the earth.

Although most countries of the world are very particular regarding conservation of wildlife, the number of wild animals is reducing day by day. World Wild Life Fund is the international agency, which is doing commendable work in promoting the protection of wildlife. There are national agencies also engaged in the conservation of wildlife.

**Some steps in the direction of wildlife conservation could be as follows:**

(i) To survey and collect all the information about wildlife, especially, their number and growth.

- (ii) To protect habitat by protecting forests.
- (iii) To delimit the areas of their natural
- (iv) To protect wildlife from pollution and from natural hazards.
- (v) To impose complete restriction on hunting and capturing of wildlife.
- (vi) To impose restrictions on export and import of wildlife products and severe punishment to be given to those who indulge in this activity.
- (vii) To develop game sanctuaries for specific wild animals or for general world life.
- (viii) To make special arrangements to protect those species whose number is very limited.
- (ix) To develop general awareness at national and international level regarding protection of wildlife.
- (x) To adopt a system of wildlife management through trained personnel.

India is a good example where several steps have been taken for wildlife conservation. It is a country of varied wildlife, where more than 500 types of wild animals, 2,100 types of birds and about 20,000 types of reptiles and fishes have been found. According to an estimate, in India, about 200 species of wild animals and birds have already become extinct and another 2,500 are on the verge of extinction.

Some of them are black buck, chinkara, wolf, swamp deer, nilgai, Indian gazelle, antelope, tiger, rhinoceros, gir lion, crocodile, flamingo, pelican, bustard, white crane, grey heron, mountain quail, etc. In India, the government and NGOs are taking keen interest in the protection of wildlife. The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 has several provisions for the conservation of wildlife.

As many as 165 game sanctuaries and 21 national parks have been developed to protect the natural habitat and wild animals. Apart from this, a Wild Life Conservation Week is also celebrated from 7th of October every year. But still there is a long way to go in this direction.