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STUDY NOTES

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CLASS- VIII (All Section)

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Science

CHAPTER: 7 Biodiversity and conservation of Flora and Fauna

Today's Topic: Conservation of forests and wildlife

Conservation of forests and wildlife:

Forests can be saved from destruction by restricting human activity in these areas. It is not possible to prevent humans from entering the forests because there are many tribes that live in and earn their livelihood from forests. However, there are areas that are rich in wildlife, where human presence is undesirable. Such areas are identified as **protected areas** with the objective of safeguarding the flora and fauna and their habitats.

In India, several such protected areas have been earmarked. There are three types of protected areas; wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and biosphere reserves. No human activity, Such as plantation, cultivation, grazing, felling of trees or hunting, is allowed in these areas. Wildlife sanctuaries are nature reserves where birds and animals are protected. National parks are zones of land that are set aside by the government that are not to be touched. It is a specific habitat of an animal that is endangered.

Biosphere reserves are large areas of protected land for conservation of wildlife, plants and animal resources and also the traditional life of the tribal people living in the area. These reserves are large and diverse and

protect the entire sets of **ecosystems**. They help in preserving the flora, fauna, landscape and historic objects of the area.

Ecosystem: a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Endangered species are animals or plants that are in danger of becoming extinct. Over the past years, many animals and plants have become extinct. The woolly mammoth and the dodo are some examples. Wildlife must be protected because it is an inseparable part of the web of life on earth. The loss of any one link has a damaging effect the entire web.

In recent decades, the rate at which plant and animal species are perishing has increased dramatically. It is now estimated that 124 varieties of amphibians, 1,108 varieties of birds, 734 varieties of fish, 1,096 varieties of mammals and 253 varieties of reptiles have become endangered worldwide since 1966.

In India, the animals on the list of endangered species include the Asiatic lion, Ganges river dolphins, hangul, Himalayan wolf, one-horned rhinoceros, lion-tailed macaque, Malabar , Nilgiri tahr, pygmy hog, red panda, Royal Bengal tiger, snow leopard, golden cat, pink-headed duck and wild water buffalo. Unless urgent steps are taken to protect these animals, they may soon become extinct. Setting up of wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and biosphere reserves are positive steps taken in this direction.

Endangered species: species at serious risk of becoming extinct.

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