Chapter 7: Forest and Wildlife Resources

CONTENTS 4 exercises · 6 questions

7.1	Multiple Choice Questions	1 Q
7.2	Match the following	1 Q
7.3	Answer the following questions in about 30 words	2 Q
7.4	Answer the following questions in about 120 words	2 Q

Exercise 7.1 — Multiple Choice Questions

Q1 Which of the following conservation strategies do not directly involve community participation? (a) Joint forest management (b) Beej Bachao Andolan (c) Chipko Movement (d) Demarcation of Wildlife sanctuaries

SOLUTION

Joint forest management, the Beej Bachao Andolan and the Chipko Movement are all community-driven efforts in which local villagers and citizen's groups actively protect and restore forests and wildlife.

Demarcation of Wildlife sanctuaries, however, is a government measure carried out through the Forest Department and other government departments, so it does not directly involve community participation.

Answer: (d) Demarcation of Wildlife sanctuaries

Exercise 7.2 — Match the following

Q1 Match the following: Reserved forests; Protected forests; Unclassed forests — with — (A) Other forests and wastelands belonging to both government and private individuals and communities. (B) Forests are regarded as most valuable as far as the conservation of forest and wildlife resources. (C) Forest lands are protected from any further depletion.

SOLUTION

Reserved forests → Forests are regarded as most valuable as far as the conservation of forest and wildlife resources (more than half of the total forest land has been declared reserved).

Protected forests → Forest lands are protected from any further depletion (almost one-third of the total forest area, as declared by the Forest Department).

Unclassed forests → Other forests and wastelands belonging to both government and private individuals and communities.

Answer: Reserved forests — most valuable for conservation; Protected forests — protected from further depletion; Unclassed forests — other forests and wastelands belonging to both government and private individuals and communities.

Exercise 7.3 — Answer the following questions in about 30 words

Q1 What is biodiversity? Why is biodiversity important for human lives?

SOLUTION

Biodiversity or Biological Diversity is immensely rich in wildlife and cultivated species, diverse in form and function but closely integrated in a system through a multiple network of interdependencies.

It is important because we humans, along with all living organisms, form a complex web of ecological system on which we depend for our existence. Plants, animals and micro-organisms re-create the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil that produces our food, without which we cannot survive.

Answer: Biodiversity is the rich variety of wild and cultivated species closely integrated through interdependencies; it matters because humans depend on this ecological web for clean air, water and soil, and hence for survival.

Q2 How have human activities affected the depletion of flora and fauna? Explain.

SOLUTION

Diverse flora and fauna have come under great stress mainly due to human insensitivity to our environment, causing a rapid decline in wildlife population and forestry.

The impact is clear from the tiger, a key wildlife species: its population dwindled from an estimated 55,000 at the turn of the century to 1,827 by 1973. The major human-caused threats include poaching for trade, shrinking habitat, depletion of prey base species and a growing human population. The trade of tiger skins and the use of their bones in traditional medicines pushed the species to the verge of extinction, showing how human activities deplete flora and fauna.

Answer: Human insensitivity, poaching and illegal trade, shrinking habitats, depletion of prey species and a growing human population have severely reduced flora and fauna — as seen in the fall of the tiger population from about 55,000 to 1,827 by 1973.

Exercise 7.4 — Answer the following questions in about 120 words

Q1 Describe how communities have conserved and protected forests and wildlife in India?

SOLUTION

In India, forests are also home to some traditional communities, and in many areas local communities struggle to conserve these habitats along with government officials, recognising that only this will secure their own long-term livelihood.

In the Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, villagers have fought against mining by citing the Wildlife Protection Act. In many areas villagers themselves protect habitats and explicitly reject government involvement — the inhabitants of five villages in the Alwar district of Rajasthan have declared 1,200 hectares of forest as the Bhairodev Dakav 'Sonchuri', with their own set of rules and regulations that do not allow hunting and protect the wildlife against outside encroachments.

The famous Chipko movement in the Himalayas has successfully resisted deforestation and shown that community afforestation with indigenous species can be enormously successful. Farmers' and citizens' groups like the Beej Bachao Andolan in Tehri and Navdanya have shown that diversified crop production without synthetic chemicals is viable. Nature worship has preserved several virgin forests as Sacred Groves, and in and around Bishnoi villages in Rajasthan, herds of blackbuck (chinkara), nilgai and peacocks are protected as an integral part of the community.

Answer: Communities protect forests and wildlife through local action (Sariska anti-mining fight; Alwar's Bhairodev Dakav 'Sonchuri' on 1,200 hectares), movements like Chipko and Beej Bachao Andolan/Navdanya, and traditions such as Sacred Groves and Bishnoi protection of blackbuck, nilgai and peacocks.

Q2 Write a note on good practices towards conserving forest and wildlife.

SOLUTION

Conservation preserves ecological diversity and our life support systems — water, air and soil — and also the genetic diversity of plants and animals for better growth of species and breeding, on which agriculture and fisheries still depend.

A good practice is legal protection. The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act was implemented in 1972 with provisions for protecting habitats; it banned hunting, gave legal protection to habitats and restricted trade in wildlife, and an all-India list of protected species was published. Central and state governments established national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and announced projects for gravely threatened animals such as the tiger, the one-horned rhinoceros, the Kashmir stag (hangul), crocodiles, the Asiatic lion, and later the Indian elephant, black buck, the great Indian bustard and the snow leopard. Project Tiger was launched in 1973. Conservation now focuses on biodiversity as a whole, so even insects and, since 1991, plants have been added to the list of protected species.

Involving local communities is another good practice. The joint forest management (JFM) programme, in formal existence since 1988 when Odisha passed the first resolution, involves village institutions in protecting and restoring degraded forests; in return, members receive intermediary benefits like non-timber forest produce and a share in the timber harvested. The guiding principle is to accept only those economic or developmental activities that are people-centric, environment-friendly and economically rewarding.

Answer: Good practices include legal protection (Wildlife Protection Act 1972), national parks and sanctuaries, species projects like Project Tiger (1973), protecting biodiversity as a whole (including insects and plants), joint forest management involving local communities, and choosing only people-centric, environment-friendly, economically rewarding activities.