

UNIT

22

CONSERVATION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS



Learning Objectives

After the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ◆ understand deforestation, afforestation and reforestation.
- ◆ list out the endangered species.
- ◆ understand the importance of conservation of wildlife.
- ◆ know about Red Data Book and its advantages.
- ◆ list out the importance of Peoples' Biodiversity Register.
- ◆ know about the functions of animal welfare organisations.



Introduction

Our planet earth is filled with so many species of plants and animals. According to the scientists there are about 70 – 100 lakh species on the earth. The sum total of all these animals is called biodiversity. Bio means life, diversity means variety or different. Thus, bio-diversity means variety of life forms on the earth and the essential interdependence of all living things. When you travel through the forests in the mountain ranges you can see variety of life forms. Forests are abundant with fruit trees and flowers and inhabited by chirping birds, prancing deer and plenty of other animals. All through the literature of ages, it has been mentioned that India is full of forests filled with wildlife. Unfortunately, from then to now, most of these forests have been cut down. This phenomenon is seen all across the world. Forests as a natural resource are decreasing in area in the recent years. In this lesson we are going to learn about deforestation, endangered species, conservation of plants and animals and wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

22.1 Deforestation

Forests are the important renewable resources. They cover about 30 percent of the world's land surface. They produce oxygen and maintain the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Forests provide many important goods such as timber, paper and medicinal plants. They control water runoff, protect soil, and regulate climate changes. But the forests all around the world are being destroyed. Destruction of forests in order to make the land available for different uses is known as deforestation. Deforestation has resulted in several ecological imbalances such as increase in temperature, deficiency in rainfall etc. It has also resulted in the extinction of several species of animals and plants.

22.1.1 Causes of Deforestation

Deforestation may be caused by nature or it may be due to human activities. Fires and floods are the natural causes for deforestation. Human activities which are responsible for deforestation include agricultural expansion, cattle breeding,