

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF FOREST BIODIVERSITY BY WWF

Prelims: Environment- Biodiversity, Institutions

Mains: GS-III- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has released the first-ever global assessment of forest biodiversity.

Key Findings:

- ▶▶ There has been a 53% decline in the number of forest wildlife populations since 1970.
- ▶▶ Of the 455 monitored populations of forest specialists, more than half declined at an annual rate of 1.7 per cent, on average between 1970 and 2014.
- ▶▶ While the decline was consistent in these years among mammals, reptiles and amphibians (particularly from the tropical forests), it was less among birds (especially from temperate forests).

Threats:

- ▶▶ Loss of habitat due to logging, agricultural expansion, mining, hunting, conflicts and spread of diseases accounted for almost 60 per cent of threats.
- ▶▶ Nearly 20 per cent of threats were due to over exploitation. Of the 112 forest-dwelling primate populations, 40 were threatened by overexploitation (hunting).
- ▶▶ Climate change, on the other hand, threatened to 43 per cent of amphibian populations, 37 per cent of reptile populations, 21 per cent of bird populations but only 3 per cent of mammal populations.
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