

Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Gangetic Plains



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Current Range and Status of Biodiversity

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3.1. PAS AND TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS IN GP

Wildlife management in our country has been the responsibility of foresters ever since scientific forestry commenced some 125 years ago. During the initial stages, the emphasis was on consolidation of the legal and silvicultural status of the reserved forests. A considerable proportion of forestland during this period was under individual ownership. The pressure on forestland was also less, because of low population levels of both human beings as well as cattle. In the second quarter of the 20th century, the pressure on the land increased due to the steep increase in human population, which resulted in the shrinkage of wilderness. As a sequel, some areas were declared as sanctuaries for conserving wildlife. To provide better legal status, the Indian Forest Act of 1927 was amended, and the Indian Game Act of 1935 was introduced. During the post 'Independence' era, the proprietary rights in private forests were abolished, without simultaneously transferring the authority to the 'Forest Department' for management. This resulted in the rapid loss of forests due to encroachments and grazing. Considerable amount of wilderness was also sacrificed for agriculture, irrigation, power, industrial and other developmental projects. Thus, in a couple of decades the ecosystem was destroyed to a great extent. During the seventies, major steps