

Conserving the Sundarbans

What is the issue?

\n\n

The steady loss of mangroves in the Sundarbans makes conservation efforts vital.

\n\n

What are mangroves?

\n\n

\n

- A mangrove is a shrub or small tree that grows in coastal saline or brackish water.

\n

- Mangroves are salt tolerant trees, also called halophytes, and are adapted to life in harsh coastal conditions.

\n

- They are adapted to the low oxygen (anoxic) conditions of waterlogged mud.

\n

\n\n

What are the importance of mangroves?

\n\n

\n

- It is a nature's shield against cyclones, ecological disasters and as protector of shorelines.

\n

- Breeding and nursery grounds for a variety of marine animals.

\n

- Good source of timber, fuel and fodder.

\n

- Purifies air by absorbing pollutants in the air.

\n

\n\n

What are the significance of Sundarbans mangroves?

\n\n

\n

- It is the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world.
- It is spread across parts of Bangladesh's Khulna Division and the Indian state of West Bengal.
- In the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta, Sundari trees are found, which provide durable hard timber.
- This mangrove forests are known to serve as a habitat for turtles, crocodiles, gharials, snakes and tigers.
- This area covers a National Park, Tiger reserve and a Biosphere Reserve.
- It serves as a protective flood barrier for the inhabitants of Kolkata during cyclone.

\n

\n\n

What is the need for conservation?

\n\n

\n

- Long-term damage to the mangroves on the Indian side occurred when forests were cut to facilitate cultivation.
- Climate change appears to be a threat to the entire 10,000 sq km area.
- There is also a unique population of tigers that live here, adapted to move easily across the land-sea interface.
- Human settlements which depends on this mangroves for their lively hood, which will be ruined due to environmental concerns.

\n

\n\n

How it can be done?

\n\n

\n

- Local actions are needed to protect the banks from erosion.
- Strengthening the mangroves with endemic species that can thrive in

\n

changing salinity conditions can provide co-benefits to local communities.

\n

- Ecotourism holds the potential to raise awareness and funds for the conservation.

\n

- International climate finance to be channelled to India and Bangladesh for the region's preservation.

\n

- Climate research and social science have a synergistic role in giving the Sundarbans a greater chance of survival.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

