Mega Species Myopia

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- So many other small animals are on the verge of extinction.
\n
- This is due to the flaw in our conservation efforts called, “mega species myopia”.
\n

\n\n

What is the present condition?

\n\n

\n
- The hog deer were the principal food of the tiger in the grasslands of Corbett National Park in the sixties.
\n
- There was an abundance of them.
\n
- Now there may be just 20 of them in Corbett.
\n
- Great Indian Bustard is the State bird of Rajasthan.
\n
- It is one of the rarest species and undoubtedly one of the most endangered.
\n
- They are endemic to Jaisalmer and Pokhran, its habitat was severely damaged by the nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998.
\n
- The mouse deer can be found in the Sal forests of south India, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.
\n
- They raise their young in the hollow of the fallen Sal, but unfortunately these trees are used as fuel wood, endangering their survival.
\n
- The pangolin is endangered due to supposed medicinal value of their scales and the meat demand in China.
\n

- Similarly, so many other small animals are on the verge of extinction.
  \n

\n\n

What is “mega species myopia”?

\n\n

  \n
- When a tiger dies in a national park, it makes it to the front pages of newspapers.
  \n
- Steps are taken to avert another tiger death.
  \n
- There is similar for death and destruction of habitats of other large mammals like elephants, rhinos, leopards and snow leopards.
  \n
- However, similar concern is not shown for several smaller species like Great Indian Bustard, the house sparrow, the shy Indian pangolin, the caracal, etc.
  \n
- Such an attitude is called “mega species myopia”.
  \n

\n\n

Why too much focus is on big animals?

\n\n

  \n
- Protecting big animals like, the tiger, leads to protecting an ebtire ecosystem.
  \n
- They attract tourists.
  \n
- Much of an outrage is shown immediately by animals in case of threat to these animals due to their popularity.
  \n

\n\n

Why should other species be protected?

\n\n

  \n
- Unless similar support is extend to the prey base of bigger animals the ecosystems might collapse.
  \n

- The big cat only dominates the high grasslands.
  \n
- So other ecosystems like the dry grasslands, the mountains might be left unprotected.
  \n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

  \n
- We have the expertise to save these small species but lack the political will.
  \n
- It is time we gave priority to animals on the basis of the threat perception to them.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

