

Preface

Nature has provided tremendous amount of resources to human-beings for fulfilling their needs. Expanding human population results in expanding needs of human beings. With technological advancements human beings have started utilizing the natural resources at a much larger scale. The continuous increase in the population and consumption causes an increasing demand of resources. The current situation has worsened in India owing to this situation where these non-renewal resources will be exhausted after a period of time. We are infact using those resources, which are needed by the future generation and are, therefore, depleting the overall resources present in nature. There is now a global realization about the urgent need to conserve the world's biological diversity. The conservation is the practice embracing the preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilization, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.

Environment has been an important factor shaping the biosphere to it's present shape and composition. However, in the process it has to undergo drastic changes itself. The environment in which life appeared was all together different from the present – day environment being threatened by man.

The land and ocean environments of the earth support a large variety of the living organisms, plants, animals and human-beings. Therefore, do we have any right to destroy, what we have inherited from the nature and mother earth and deprive our future generations of the clean environment? If extinctions are the part of nature course, why does it matter that so many of species are becoming extinct now? Ponder and act now, before it is too late?

Nature took 600 million years to develop the environment as it exists today but man in barely one million years of his existence, has brought about such changes which threaten the very existence of a healthy bio-sphere. On earth's surface, both in water as well as on land, these changes result in impoverishment of biological systems and degeneration of biodiversity. In the atmosphere rising concentration of CO₂ causes

global warming while pollution of stratosphere has been eating away the vital ozone shield. These changes are expected to make human life more and more miserable in times to come.

Issues concerning environment now worry not only scientists but statesman and general public as well. A pressing need has been felt to educate the common man about problem of environment. Earth and it's treasures belong to our children and grand children as much as they do to use. It is, therefore, our prime duty to conserve them.

The present Volume 4 of the book series *Animal Diversity, Natural History and Conservation* gives a concise information in the fields of biology encompassing animal diversity, their natural history and conservation. There are twenty one chapters in this book contributed from all over the world by animal scientists covering a wide range of subjects related to the animal world and each chapter is the outcome of their research conducted by the contributor working in the relevant areas for a considerable period.

Hopefully, the present volume will be of immense help to the researchers of biology, natural sciences and its related fields in many ways.

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