



Biodiversity & Conservation:

International Observances & Key Themes:

World Nature Conservation Day: July 28, 2025, marks World Nature Conservation Day. This annual observance emphasizes the critical need for conserving natural resources and biodiversity for present and future generations. The overarching message for 2025 is that conservation begins with awareness and translates into collective action, stressing everyone's role in protecting air, water, soil, energy, minerals, and wildlife. Themes highlighted include "Restoration, Resilience, and Responsibility," focusing on rehabilitating natural habitats, building resilience against environmental deterioration, and urging responsible actions from individuals, organizations, and governments.

International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem (July 26): While observed two days prior, this UNESCO-established day continues to be a vital ecological observance. The theme for 2025 is "Protecting Wetlands for our future," underscoring the importance of mangroves as nature-based solutions for a sustainable future, especially for carbon storage and sequestration.

Species Conservation & Rediscoveries:

Kākāpō Comeback (New Zealand): The large, flightless kākāpō parrot, once on the verge of extinction, has shown a remarkable rebound. As of 2024, the known population stands at 244 individuals, all residing on predator-free islands with some reintroduced to the New Zealand mainland. This success is attributed to long-term planning, technological innovation (smart

transmitters, automated feeders, drones for sperm transport), precision breeding (artificial insemination), and meticulous genetic management to mitigate inbreeding risks. Despite being critically endangered with low genetic diversity, its recovery offers valuable lessons for high-stakes species management.

Barbados Threadsnake Rediscovery: The Barbados threadsnake, believed to be the world's smallest snake and thought lost to science for nearly two decades, was rediscovered in March 2025. Ecologist Connor Blades found the tiny, blind reptile (about 10 cm long) beneath a rock in one of the last remaining natural woodlands on the island. This rediscovery, officially confirmed in July 2025, highlights the urgent need to protect Barbados' remaining natural forests.

IUCN Red List Updates:

Fungi: The first 1,000 fungi on the IUCN Red List reveal growing threats from deforestation, agriculture, and urban development.

Frankincense Trees: Face increasing extinction risk.

Coral Species: Over 40% of coral species face extinction.

Trees Globally: 38% of the world's trees are threatened.

Roanoke Loggerch Delisted: After successful aquatic restoration efforts, this freshwater darter is no longer at risk of extinction and has been removed from the federal list.

Dwarf-flowered Heartleaf Delisted: Removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened plants after decades of partnership-





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driven recovery efforts in North and South Carolina.

Blue Tree Monitor: Public comment period reopened for its proposed listing as an endangered species.

Pangolins: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing federal protections for several pangolin species due to illegal wildlife tracking, habitat loss, and poor genetic health.

Iberian Lynx: Improved from Endangered to Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, continuing its recovery.

Hoverflies in Europe: 37% of these essential pollinators are threatened with extinction, mainly due to intensive agriculture, pesticides, unsustainable forestry, urban development, and climate change.

Deep-sea Hydrothermal Vent Molluscs: Almost two-thirds of assessed species are threatened, highlighting urgent protection needs.

Conservation Efforts & Policy:

Eco-Stop at Gharana Wetland, Jammu & Kashmir (India): The Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, inaugurated a new Eco-Stop Building at Gharana Wetland. He emphasized the government's commitment to safeguarding ecological systems, promoting sustainable tourism, and called for community-led conservation to preserve this Important Bird Area (IBA) which hosts migratory birds like the Bar-headed Goose.

Ramsar Sites Expansion in India: On World Environment Day (June 4, 2025), two wetlands from Rajasthan—Khichan in Phalodi and Menar

in Udaipur—were officially designated as Ramsar Sites, reflecting India's commitment to wetland conservation. Rajasthan now has four Ramsar Sites.

Ramsar COP15 (July 23-31, 2025, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe): The 15th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is ongoing. The theme is "Protecting wetlands for our common future," focusing on the vital role of wetlands in providing fresh water, livelihoods, protecting communities from natural disasters, and acting as carbon sinks. UNEP-WCMC is involved in supporting conservation and restoration of vulnerable freshwater ecosystems.

Defense Projects in Protected Areas (India): The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has approved 32 defense infrastructure proposals involving land diversion from protected areas and eco-sensitive zones across Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Ladakh, and Sikkim. The approvals come with conditions for environmental protection and mitigation measures, with concerns raised about wildlife movement, especially in ecologically fragile sanctuaries like Karakoram and Changthang.

Volunteering for Conservation in India: World Nature Conservation Day encourages volunteering with environmental organizations in India, focusing on biodiversity hotspots, climate storytelling, legal protections, animal rescue, and sustainable living initiatives.

Threats to Biodiversity:

Climate Change Impact: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a unanimous advisory opinion on July 23, 2025, stating that countries are obligated to combat climate change, as rising





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temperatures and extreme weather lead to biodiversity loss and risk human health. Climate change causes habitat destruction, species extinction, and ecosystem disruptions through rising temperatures, extreme weather, wildfires, ocean acidification, and sea level rise.

Lightning-induced Tree Deaths: A new study found that 320 million trees die each year directly from lightning strikes, often invisibly. This contributes 0.77 to 1.09 billion tons of CO₂ per year, nearly matching wildfire emissions from live vegetation. Climate change is expected to increase lightning frequency, further impacting carbon storage.

Coral Reefs: Ocean warming and acidification lead to coral bleaching and collapse, threatening marine biodiversity and human communities reliant on them.

Amphibians: Climate change is emerging as one of the biggest threats to amphibians, already among the most threatened animals.

Habitat Loss and Degradation: Conversion of natural lands for agriculture and urban development, coupled with fragmentation, remains a leading cause of biodiversity loss.

Overexploitation and Illegal Trade: Unsustainable levels of taking wildlife, plants, and fish, along with illegal logging, poaching, and trafficking, continue to drive population declines.

Invasive Species: Non-native species disrupt native ecosystems by competing with or preying upon native flora and fauna, rapidly spreading due to global trade and climate change.

Pollution: Atmospheric nitrogen fluxes and microplastics are reaching even remote protected areas, causing significant ecological harm.

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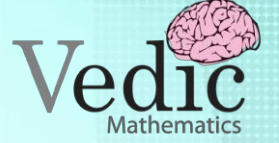
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MCQS

1. What is the overarching message emphasized on World Nature Conservation Day 2025?

- a) Focus solely on renewable energy.
- b) Conservation begins with awareness and translates into collective action.
- c) Economic growth takes precedence over environmental protection.
- d) Individual actions have no significant impact on conservation.

Answer: b) Conservation begins with awareness and translates into collective action.

The news states, "The overarching message for 2025 is that conservation begins with awareness and translates into collective action..."

2. What is the theme for the International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem (observed July 26, 2025)?

- a) "Mangroves for Life"
- b) "Protecting Wetlands for our future"
- c) "Mangroves: Our Coastal Shields"
- d) "Restore Mangroves, Restore Life"

Answer: b) "Protecting Wetlands for our future"
The news mentions, "The theme for 2025 is 'Protecting Wetlands for our future'..."

3. As of 2024, what is the known population of the Kākāpō parrot?

- a) Fewer than 50
- b) 150 individuals
- c) 244 individuals
- d) Over 300 individuals

Answer: c) 244 individuals

The news states, "As of 2024, the known population stands at 244 individuals."

4. What is the approximate length of the Barbados threadsnake, believed to be the world's smallest snake?

- a) 5 cm
- b) 10 cm
- c) 15 cm
- d) 20 cm

Answer: b) 10 cm

The news describes the Barbados threadsnake as "about 10 cm long".

5. What percentage of the world's trees are currently threatened, according to IUCN Red List updates?

- a) 25%
- b) 38%
- c) 50%
- d) 62%

Answer: b) 38%

The news states, "38% of the world's trees are threatened."

6. Which two wetlands from Rajasthan were officially designated as Ramsar Sites on World Environment Day (June 4, 2025)?

- a) Chilika Lake and Sambhar Lake
- b) Khichan and Menar
- c) Wular Lake and Renuka Wetland
- d) Loktak Lake and Ashtamudi Wetland

Answer: b) Khichan and Menar

The news reports, "two wetlands from Rajasthan—Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur—were officially designated as Ramsar Sites..."

7. Where is the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands being held from July 23-31, 2025?

- a) Geneva, Switzerland
- b) Nairobi, Kenya





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- c) Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
d) New Delhi, India

Answer: c) Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

The news states, "The 15th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is ongoing... held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe."

8. How many defense infrastructure proposals involving land diversion from protected areas did the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) approve in India?

- a) 15
b) 20
c) 32
d) 45

Answer: c) 32

The news states, "The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has approved 32 defense infrastructure proposals..."

9. What did the International Court of Justice (ICJ) state in its unanimous advisory opinion on July 23, 2025, regarding climate change?

- a) Climate change is primarily a scientific issue, not a legal one.
b) Countries have no legal obligation to combat climate change.
c) Countries are obligated to combat climate change as rising temperatures lead to biodiversity loss.
d) Only developed nations are obligated to combat climate change.

Answer: c) Countries are obligated to combat climate change as rising temperatures lead to biodiversity loss.

The news states, "The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a unanimous advisory opinion on July 23, 2025, stating that countries are obligated to combat climate change, as rising

temperatures and extreme weather lead to biodiversity loss..."

10. Approximately how many trees die each year directly from lightning strikes, contributing to CO₂ emissions, according to a new study?

- a) 100 million
b) 320 million
c) 500 million
d) 1 billion

Answer: b) 320 million

The news mentions, "A new study found that 320 million trees die each year directly from lightning strikes..."

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