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Biodiversity & Conservation:

International Agreements and Governance

Marine Biodiversity Treaty: The second session of the Preparatory Commission for the entry into force of the high-seas biodiversity treaty (BBNJ Agreement) concluded. The commission, tasked with preparing for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, discussed financial rules, rules of procedure, and arrangements for cooperation with other legal frameworks and bodies. The Republic of Moldova and Cabo Verde recently signed and ratified the treaty, respectively, bringing the total number of signatories to 140 and ratifications to 54.

Conservation and Species Updates

Nepal joins the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA): Nepal officially became a member of the IBCA, an India-led global initiative for the conservation of seven major big cat species, including tigers and snow leopards. This membership is seen as a way to enhance resource sharing and partnership for conservation efforts.

Small Islands as Refuges: A new study on Indonesia's Wallacea region suggests that small islands can serve as crucial genetic and ecological refuges for rare mammals, such as anoa and babirusa. The study found that while these populations have lower genetic diversity, they also have fewer harmful mutations and exist in better-protected habitats compared to their mainland counterparts. The findings caution against "genetic rescue" strategies that involve moving animals from mainland

populations, as this could introduce harmful mutations.

Local Conservation Efforts: The University of Waterloo's Environmental Reserve in Canada has installed new artificial habitats, including nest boxes for tree swallows and wood ducks and bat boxes, to support native wildlife and address habitat loss.

Urban Biodiversity and Governance

Chennai's Biodiversity Index: Chennai released its first-ever City Biodiversity Index (CBI), also known as the Singapore Index. The assessment revealed that the city has significant native biodiversity but is critically underperforming in biodiversity governance, planning, and long-term conservation strategies. The city scored well on native species presence but poorly on aspects like having a Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, undertaking biodiversity projects, and allocating a sufficient budget for conservation.

Financial and Policy Matters

World Wildlife Day 2025 Theme: The theme for World Wildlife Day, observed on March 3, was "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet." The theme highlighted the need for innovative financial solutions to protect biodiversity, addressing an estimated annual funding gap of \$824 billion. It promoted new financial models like green bonds, eco-tourism, and public-private partnerships.



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MCQS

1. What was the main task of the second session of the Preparatory Commission for the Marine Biodiversity Treaty (BBNJ Agreement)?

- a) To negotiate the core text of the treaty.
- b) To discuss financial rules, rules of procedure, and cooperation with other bodies.
- c) To decide on the list of marine species to be protected.
- d) To approve the first projects for marine protected areas.

Answer: b) To discuss financial rules, rules of procedure, and cooperation with other bodies. The text states the commission was "tasked with preparing for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties," and specifically "discussed financial rules, rules of procedure, and arrangements for cooperation with other legal frameworks and bodies."

2. Based on the study on Indonesia's Wallacea region, what is a surprising finding about mammal populations on small islands?

- a) They have greater genetic diversity than mainland populations.
- b) They are more susceptible to harmful mutations.
- c) They have lower genetic diversity but fewer harmful mutations.
- d) They are more vulnerable to habitat loss than mainland populations.

Answer: c) They have lower genetic diversity but fewer harmful mutations.

The study found that while populations on small islands had "lower genetic diversity," they also had "fewer harmful mutations."



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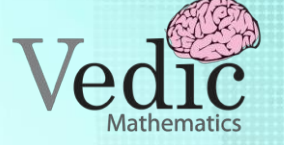
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3. What was the key weakness identified in Chennai's first City Biodiversity Index (CBI) assessment?

- a) A low number of native species.
- b) Poor performance in biodiversity governance and planning.
- c) A lack of natural ecosystems.
- d) Insufficient funding from international organizations.

Answer: b) Poor performance in biodiversity governance and planning.

The assessment revealed that while the city has "significant native biodiversity," it is "critically underperforming in biodiversity governance, planning, and long-term conservation strategies."

4. The theme for World Wildlife Day 2025, "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet," highlights the need to address what?

- a) The lack of public interest in wildlife conservation.
- b) The annual funding gap for biodiversity protection.
- c) The rise of illegal wildlife trade.
- d) The need for more wildlife documentaries.

Answer: b) The annual funding gap for biodiversity protection.

The theme was chosen to highlight "the need for innovative financial solutions to protect biodiversity, addressing an estimated annual funding gap of \$824 billion."

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