**WILDLIFE: DEFINITION AND VALUES**

Wildlife generally refers to all species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fishes occurring in the wild implying thereby undomesticated and free-roaming in a natural environment.

Wildlife Management is defined as the science and art of changing characteristics and inter-action of habitat, wild animal population and man in order to achieve specific human goals by means of wildlife resources. Wildlife Management, is therefore, concerned with the abundance and distribution of vertebrate species while wildlife managers have also to manage habitats, including vegetation and invertebrates which are foods or cause diseases to the wildlife.

Most wildlife management, has until recently been directed towards so-called game species. With growing realization that all wild vertebrates possess important values, including negative values, the scope of wildlife management has been broadened to include predators, song birds, fur bearers and vertebrate pests.

**Wildlife Management - Why?**

Wildlife is produced and management to realize several diverse values in which public and private interests are involved. These values are:-

1. **Biological Ecological Value**

Wild animals contribute towards productive eco-systems, providing for food, water and fertilizer. Wildlife activities enhance the productivity and stability of eco-systems by providing services such as soil tillage, pollination, seed dispersal and planting, natural regulation of plant and animal population including culling of diseased or inferior animals by predators, regulation of water resources, nutrient concentration, transport and recycling, and sanitation through scavenging. Wildlife also participates in controlling the abundance of pest species and in maintaining the genetic quality and health of prey populations through culling inferior individuals. Marine fishes, reptiles, mammals and birds concentrate nutrients carried to the sea due to erosion. Harvest of these forms of bird fauna is used to enhance the productivity of the sea. Decay of wild animal faeces and carcasses also adds to the fertility of otherwise infertile areas.

1. **Scientific, Philosophical and Educational Values**

Wildlife populations have always been made the subjects of scientific and philosophical studies by Ecologists, Physiologists, Pathologists, Demographers, Sociologists and Anthropologists. Wildlife examples are quoted in schools and at nature centres. Organic evolution theories were brought by studying relationships and distribution of living and fossilized plants and animals. The dangers of chlorinated hydrocarbons (pesticides) were made known when their effects on sensitive species of wildlife were found.

1. **Social Value**

The community as a whole improves its economic base through the multiple effect of wildlife – oriented out door recreation. Economic riches provide for community programmes such as schools, libraries, recreation centres and medical facilities.

1. **Recreational Value**

Benefits from outdoor activities involving the persuit of wildlife are derived in the form of pleasure, adventure and enhanced physical and mental health by hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, photographers, hikers and tourists of all kinds.

1. **Aesthetic Value**

Wildlife and their habitats are the objects of beauty and of historic significance. They also become part of poetry, literature, art and music. This is an attribute which is the most personal variously conceived by various people.

1. **Commercial Value**

The income derived from selling or trading wild animals (and birds) and their products, or from conducting a business based on access to wildlife populations is the commercial value of wildlife. The wild meat and furs are harvested all over the world. Wildlife viewing and hunting trigger a chain of commercial activities viz., guided tours, outfitters, sports goods retailers and whole salers, motels, restaurants and transportation industries. Sports activities may include hunting, fishing camping, hiking and travelling.

1. **Negative Values**

Wildlife also damage crops and other property. These damages are to be controlled. Wild boar and porcupine damage to crops and forest trees is well known. Predators can diminish the number of useful wild animals and domestic livestock.

**MAJOR AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

1. Protection, preservation, conservation of wildlife
2. Improvement of wildlife and their habitat through:
3. rehabilitation of natural habitat and
4. replenishing wildlife populations through captive breeding
5. Management of wildlife and their habitat
6. Provision of recreation
7. Mass education on wildlife and its importance
8. Research and training
9. Liaison with national and international Wildlife Conservation agencies

**Assignment:** What do you know about Ecosystem? Write down characteristics of the following ecosystems and the wildlife associated with them:

1. Arid
2. Wetland
3. Forest
4. Mountain
5. Coastal

**WILDLIFE PROTECTED AREAS (WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, GAME RESERVE, NATIONAL PARK)**

**Wildlife Sanctuary**

It is the area set aside as undisturbed breeding ground for the protection of wildlife. The area is owned by the government. Public access is limited. Forest exploitation is allowed only to reduce fire hazards, epidemic or insect attack or other natural calamities.

The acts prohibited in the area include:

1. hunting, shooting, killing or capturing of wild animal in a wildlife sanctuary or within one & a half mile radius of its boundary
2. firing of fire arms or doing any other act which may disturb any mammal or bird or doing any act which interferes with breeding places
3. felling, trampling or damaging any wild plant
4. cleaning or ploughing land for cultivation or other purposes
5. polluting water flowing through the wildlife sanctuary

**Game Reserve**

It is either a Government owned or privately owned area notified by the government. Hunting and shooting of wild animals is not allowed except under a special permit, which may specify the maximum number of animals or birds that may be killed or captured and the area and duration for which such permits shall be valid, provided that the number of occasions for which hunting and shooting may be done shall not exceed two in a year, except with the express approval of the Governor.

Question: How many Wildlife Sanctuaries and Game Reserves are there in various provinces of Pakistan?

**National Park**

National Park is a comparatively large area (of at least 1000 hectares) declared by the Government with specific purposes of protecting and preserving the flora and fauna. The area is of an out standing scenic value and of wildlife importance. The area is accessible to public for recreation, education and research purposes. The acts prohibited in a wildlife sanctuary are also prohibited in the National Park; however, access roads and amenity buildings can be constructed for the visiting public without impairing the object of the establishment of the National Park.

Question: Write down the number and names of National Parks of Pakistan.