

Important Environment & Ecology Current Affairs News for UPPCS Exam 2012

- The WGEEP (Western Ghats expert Panel) designated entire Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area. The panel in its report classified the 142 taluks in the Western Ghats boundary into Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1, 2 and 3.
- Scientists discovered a fossil of a tail-bone belonging to a titanosaur on Antarctica. The new specimen was discovered on James Ross Island. Their remains were found around the world but this is the first evidence to support the fact that they roamed Antarctica.
- The Senate of Brazil on 7 December 2011 approved the bill that reforms rules on the amount of land farmers must preserve as forest. Brazilian senators voted by 59 to seven to approve the legislation.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 1 December 2011 approved 1656 crore rupees scheme for phase-3 of Yamuna Action plan. Under this project, the sewage treatment plants situated in Kondli, Rithala and Okhla will be rehabilitated. At present, the project is operational in 21 cities of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Haryana. The Indian government will execute the phase-3 of Yamuna Action Plan with help from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). JICA is providing financial help since 1993.
- The National Green Tribunal on 30 March 2012 suspended the environment clearance granted to Posco's mega steel project in Orissa in January 2011. The tribunal comprising Justice C V Ramulu and Devendra Kumar Agarwal held that the clearance given to Posco's mega steel project in Jagatsinghpur district of Orissa will remain suspended till the environment ministry reviews it afresh.
- IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) on 10 November 2011 released the red List of threatened species, which includes 14 species of birds from India. These birds are critically endangered. The endangered birds include, Indian Vulture, Red-headed Vulture, Pink-headed Duck, Sociable Lapwing, Jerdon's Courser, Siberian Crane, White-bellied Heron, Christmas Frigatebird, Bengal Florican, Forest Owlet, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Himalayan Quail, and White-rumped Vulture.
- A new frog species was found by researchers in the second week of March 2012 at Mawphlang, about 25 kilometre from Shilong, capital of Meghalaya. The new species was named *Fejervarya Sengupti* in honour of Saibal Sengupta. Sengupta was the head of Aryavidyapeeth College and one of the pioneers of amphibian research. The new species was different from all congeners in terms of body size and call characteristics.
- The Government of Niger, in the first week of March 2012, declared the whole area-*the Termit Massif and Tin Toumma desert*- to be a national nature and culture reserve. Significantly, the area is home to some critically endangered species. It is now the largest single protected area in Africa.
- The Indian Black Eagle was spotted in the Aravali Biodiversity Park after a gap of 90 years. The bird was last seen in 1920-21 by Basin Edwardes.
- The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary also known as Manas National Park on 20 February 2012 got four rhinos from Kaziranga, which has the largest number of one-horned rhinos in the world. The translocation of rhinos has been done under the programme Indian Rhino Vision 2020.

- An international team of scientists on 13 February 2012 found that how the bees shook their abdomens when bee-eating hornets approached. This signal triggered the hornet to retreat. The researchers described how all the guard bees simultaneously vibrated their abdomens from side-to-side for a few moments when a hornet approached the colony.
- In Madagascar, one of the world's tiniest lizards called *Brookesia micra* was found by German researchers on 14 February 2012. It reaches a maximum length of 29mm. The researchers also found three new species in the north of the island. During daytime, the lizards mostly live in the leaf litter in the day and at night climb up. The lizards were limited to very small ranges and they are at risk from habitat disturbance. This discovery could help scientists explain the reason behind island dwarfism.
- Scientists rediscovered a large grey monkey-the Miller's grizzled langur- in the dense jungles of Indonesia. The monkey was believed to be extinct. The monkey has black face framed by a fluffy, Dracula-esque white collar. It has hooded eyes and a pinkish nose and lips. The animal one roamed the north-eastern part of Borneo, as well as the islands of Java and Sumatra and the Thai-Malay peninsula.
- Indian Meteorological Department on its 137th foundation day (15 January 2012), installed C-Band Polarimetric Doppler Radar system at Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi. This system uses advanced data to give information in severe weather condition like rain, hailstorms and dust storms.
- The researchers identified a new species of earthworm in Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar islands. The species was named *Moniligaster ivaniosi*, after the name of the college. The new species has unique features, which includes three pairs of genital apertures and a black line running along the middle region.
- UK scientists discovered new crab species on the Southern Ocean floor. The new crab species was named the Hoff because of its hairy chest. The Hoff lives around volcanic vents off South Georgia. The animal has yet to be formally classified. It is, however, a type of yeti crab.
- An Australian study published in the journal *Science* on 27 April 2012 revealed that climate change has accelerated the rainfall cycle. The study conducted by Australian and US scientists looked at ocean data from 1950 to 2000 and found that salinity levels had changed in oceans around the world over that time.
- According to a study report published in the journal *Nature Geoscience* on 22 April 2012, the Arctic Ocean could be a significant contributor of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The researchers found concentrations of the gas close to the ocean surface, especially in areas where sea ice had cracked or broken up.
- A study published in the journal *Public Library of Science One* on 23 April 2012, described that the diversity is the mammal's best defense when it comes to adapting climatic changes.
- NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) said in a reply to the RTI Query that 337 Tigers lost their lives in India in the last decade. NTCA elaborated that 58 tigers were found dead in 2009 and 56 in 2011. While in 2008, the number was 36 and 28 each in 2007 and 2002. As per the DATA released By NTCA, as many as 68 tigers were killed due to poaching during the period. While others died of natural causes like old age, accidents, starvation.

- The Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) on 16 April 2012 banned the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments in educational and research institutions. The ban is based on the prevention of cruelty to Animals Act (1960).
- Scientists in the first week of April 2012 unearthed fossilized bones of a foot in Ethiopia which they believe could be of a new species of human that roamed the planet some three million years ago and could offer insight into how man evolved to walk on two feet. The shape of the bones shows that the creature could walk upright at times.
- The Supreme Court of India on 10 May 2012 directed the union government to put off its decision to reintroduce the Cheetah in India. The big cats faced extinction in the sub-continent nearly a decade ago. The government was planning to import Cheetah from Africa, while the plan was not discussed with the National Board for Wildlife, a statutory body for the enforcement of wildlife laws in India.