

## **Zoological Survey of India comes up with book on mangrove biodiversity**

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Kolkata: The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has come out with a comprehensive book aimed at creating better understanding of mangrove biodiversity for its effective conservation. Restoration of mangroves is a prerequisite to fight climate change that is triggering multiple negative effects on the planet.

"Mangroves are ecologically fragile ecosystem rich in biodiversity and provide range of services like fisheries, medicines, recreation, eco tourism, bio filtration, nursery and coastal protection. It sequester carbon at a rate of two to four times greater than mature tropical forests. The local people's livelihood is very much dependent on the mangrove which is a breeding ground for fishes, crabs, mollusc," said Kailash Chandra, director of ZSI.

Elaborating on the importance of mangrove conservation, Chandra said that mangroves protect groundwater aquifers from seepage of seawater, thereby ensuring water security for the coastal population while a large amount of global fish catches upto 80 percent is dependent on mangroves thereby ensuring food security for the coastal people. The book titled "Faunal Diversity of Mangrove Ecosystem in India" provides a detailed account of the faunal communities in mangrove ecosystem of the country which is spanned across 123 countries covering a total area of 152360 sq km. India has 3.3 percent of the global mangrove cover while South Asia has 45.8 percent cover.

In the foreword to the book, C.K. Mishra, secretary of Environment, Forest and Climate Change writes that in India mangrove can remove nine tonnes of carbon dioxide everyday which is equivalent to 270 million US dollars in international market. At a time, when the conservation and sustainable utilisation of the mangrove should be stressed upon, the reality is in stark contrast. Currently as per experts , loss of mangroves is continuing at a rate of 1 percent per year which is 3 to 5 times higher than the overall rate of global forest loss. The mangrove forest formed by 73 species represent less than 0.4 percent of the global total forest area. The book authored by Chandra, KC Gopi, SS Mishra and C. Raghunathan from ZSI contains chapters contributed by leading experts across India who have stressed upon the importance of conservation of mangrove and called for international collaboration and co operation as they are vulnerable to sea level rise. It deals with 4822 species of fauna covering protozoa to mammalia in 30 chapters.

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