

Biodiversity Park in Sirumalai Hills: Tamil Nadu

Why in News?

The Government of Tamil Nadu is developing a biodiversity park in the **Sirumalai Hill Range** in Dindigul district.

 The main aim is to create awareness for the sustainable management of the ecologically sensitive area.

What are the Key Points of this Park?

- This park is a nature reserve that harbours the natural heritage of the area and has conservation, education and cultural values and will enhance the quality of the environment.
- Various biodiversity components such as mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, etc, have been showcased here.
- Different types of flowering plants have been planted all around the park and necessary irrigation facilities have been provided.
- Assemblage of nectar plants to attract butterflies and host plants has also been planned.

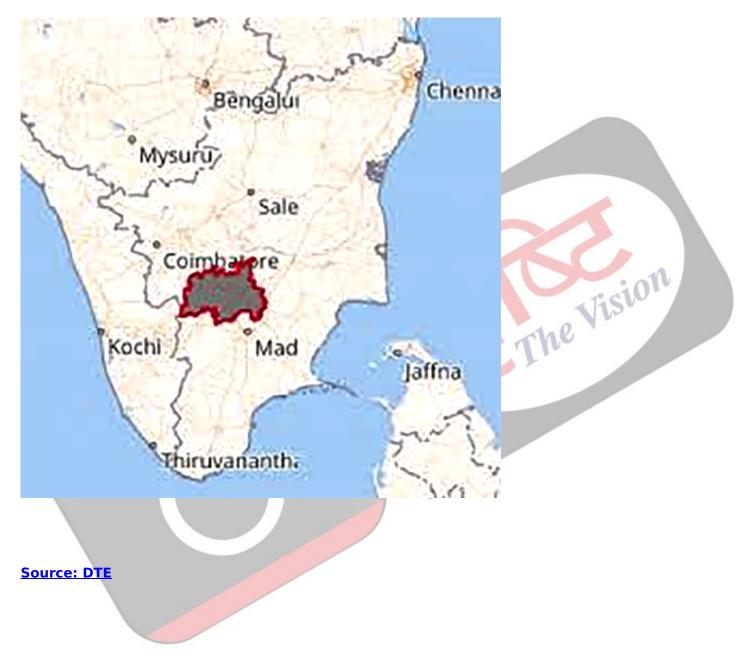
What is a Biodiversity Park?

- About:
 - The biodiversity park is a unique landscape of wilderness where ecological assemblages of native plant and animal species in the form of biological communities are recreated in a region.
 - The underlying principle of the park is **to recreate self-sustaining ecosystems with native flora and fauna** which are characteristics of the area.
- Objectives:
 - Creating awareness among the forest stakeholders, the public and the student community about biological diversity and its significance.
 - Creating plant diversity that is <u>endangered</u>, threatened and highly valuable for human existence.
 - Creating a gene bank with important plant species including rare and endemic ones.
 - Creating a <u>carbon sink</u> for future generations with indigenous species to mitigate problems of <u>global warming</u> and <u>climate change</u>.
 - Promoting the culture of conservation and appreciation towards natural resources and its management.
 - Creating **livelihood opportunities for local communities**, especially the tribal community who are part and parcel of the forest ecosystem from time immemorial.

What are the Key Points Related to Sirumalai Hill Range?

- About:
 - The Sirumalai Hills are **spread over 60,000 acres in** Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.
 - They are considered to be the **spur of the** <u>Eastern Ghats</u>. They are located about 25 kilometres from Dindigul town, at an altitude of 400 to 1,650 metres from mean sea level.
 - The hills act as a repository of several rare and endemic plants.

- Flora:
 - The lower hill range consists of highly disturbed <u>scrub forest</u> while the major portion of the middle hill ranges are occupied by tropical mixed dry deciduous forest.
 - The higher elevations are occupied by semi evergreen forest. The woodland **savannahs** are found along the slopes in the higher altitudes.
- Fauna:
 - Animals like <u>Gaur</u>, <u>Leopard</u>, spotted deer, mouse deer, barking deer, <u>Jackal</u>, <u>Sloth Bear</u>, wild boar, <u>Indian pangolin</u>, <u>slender loris</u> and several species of <u>reptiles</u> and avifauna (Birds) are found in the region.



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