



Forest Fire in J&K

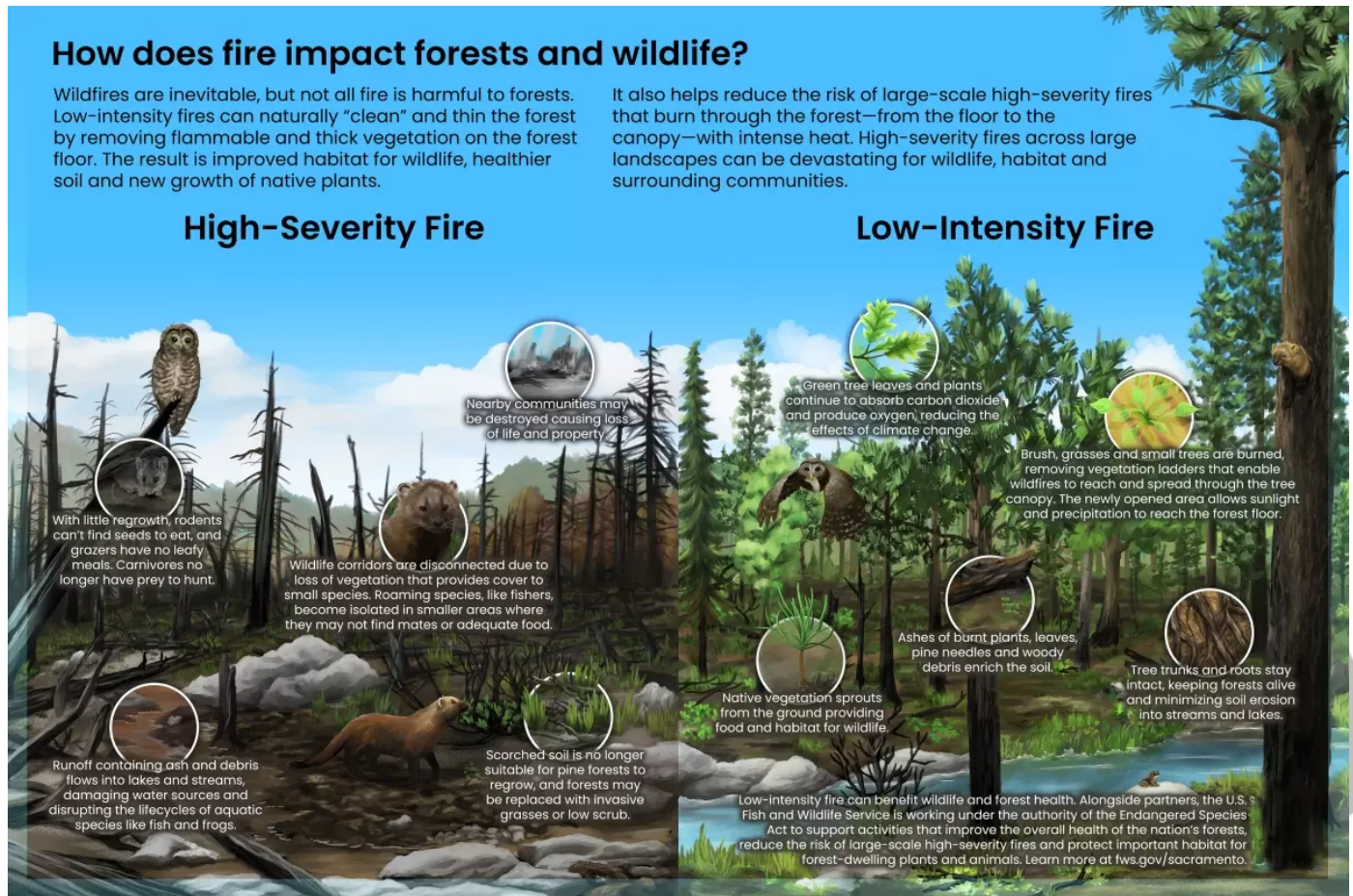
Why in News?

A massive [forest fire](#) erupted in the Bhaga village area near **NH-144A in Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir**, spreading rapidly across hundreds of hectares of land.

Key Points

- **Forest Fire Risk in J&K:**
 - In J&K, at least 1,747 square kilometres of forest area have been classified under the **'High Risk' zone** for forest fires, while 62 square kilometres fall under the **'Very High Risk'** category.
 - **As per official data:**
 - In 2022-23, a total of 1,553 forest fire incidents were reported, affecting an area of 2,774.21 hectares.
 - In 2023-24, the **number of incidents significantly declined** to 607, impacting an area of 987.24 hectares.
- **India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023 and Forest Cover in J&K:**
 - The [ISFR 2023](#) highlighted a substantial increase in forest cover which showed a rise of 34.78 sq km in the region's forest area compared to the 2021 assessment.
 - The report reveals that **J&K has shown an increase of 398.12 sq km** in forest cover in one decade from 2013 to 2023.
 - According to the Report, the **forest cover of J&K in 2013 was 20,948.27 sq km** while **in 2023 the forest cover increased to 21,346.39 sq km**.
 - **J&K boasts of the highest number of forest types in the country**, an impressive 43, along with the highest average growing stock of 296.22 cubic meters per hectare and the **highest estimated carbon stock** of 174.10 tonnes per hectare.
- **Forest Fire:**
 - **About:**
 - A forest fire refers to an **uncontrolled blaze that spreads through vegetation** taller than 1.8 metres.
 - These fires often grow into major conflagrations, sometimes **triggered by surface or ground fires** that ignite upper tree canopies.
 - When the flames leap to the top branches of trees (a phenomenon known as crowning), they can bypass the forest floor and undergrowth, rapidly intensifying.
 - Such fires often lead to **violent blowups and can evolve into firestorms**, with erratic and extreme fire behaviour.
 - **Ecological Role of Forest Fires:**
 - Though typically viewed as destructive, many forest ecosystems depend on **fire for their survival and regeneration**.
 - Natural events like lightning strikes in dry forests ignite fires that can benefit biodiversity.
 - **Related Government Initiatives:**
 - [National Action Plan for Forest Fires \(NAPFF\)](#), was started in 2018 with the goal of reducing forest fires by informing, enabling, and empowering forest fringe communities and incentivizing them to collaborate with state forest departments.

- **The Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme (FPM)** is the only government-sponsored programme dedicated to assisting states in dealing with forest fires.



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