



GEOGRAPHY

NATURAL VEGETATION
AND WILDLIFE

CLASS 9

Natural vegetation

Natural vegetation refers to a plant community, which has grown naturally without human aid and has been left undisturbed by humans for a long time. This is termed as a virgin vegetation. Thus, cultivated crops and fruits, orchards form part of vegetation but not natural vegetation.





Let us know

1. What is the percentage of forest cover in India according to India State of Forest Report 2011?

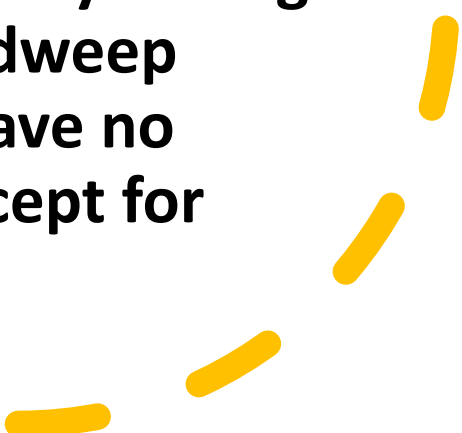
Ans. 21.05 %

2. Which one of the following states has the maximum area under forest cover?

Ans. Madhya Pradesh

3. Name the union territory having minimum area under forest cover and why is it so?

Ans. Lakshadweep is the union territory having minimum forest cover. Since Lakshadweep consists only of coral islands, they have no proper soil for growing of forests except for coconut trees.



Flora and Fauna

The term flora is used to denote plants of a particular region or period. Similarly, the species of animals are referred to as fauna. This huge diversity in flora and fauna kingdom is due to the following factors.



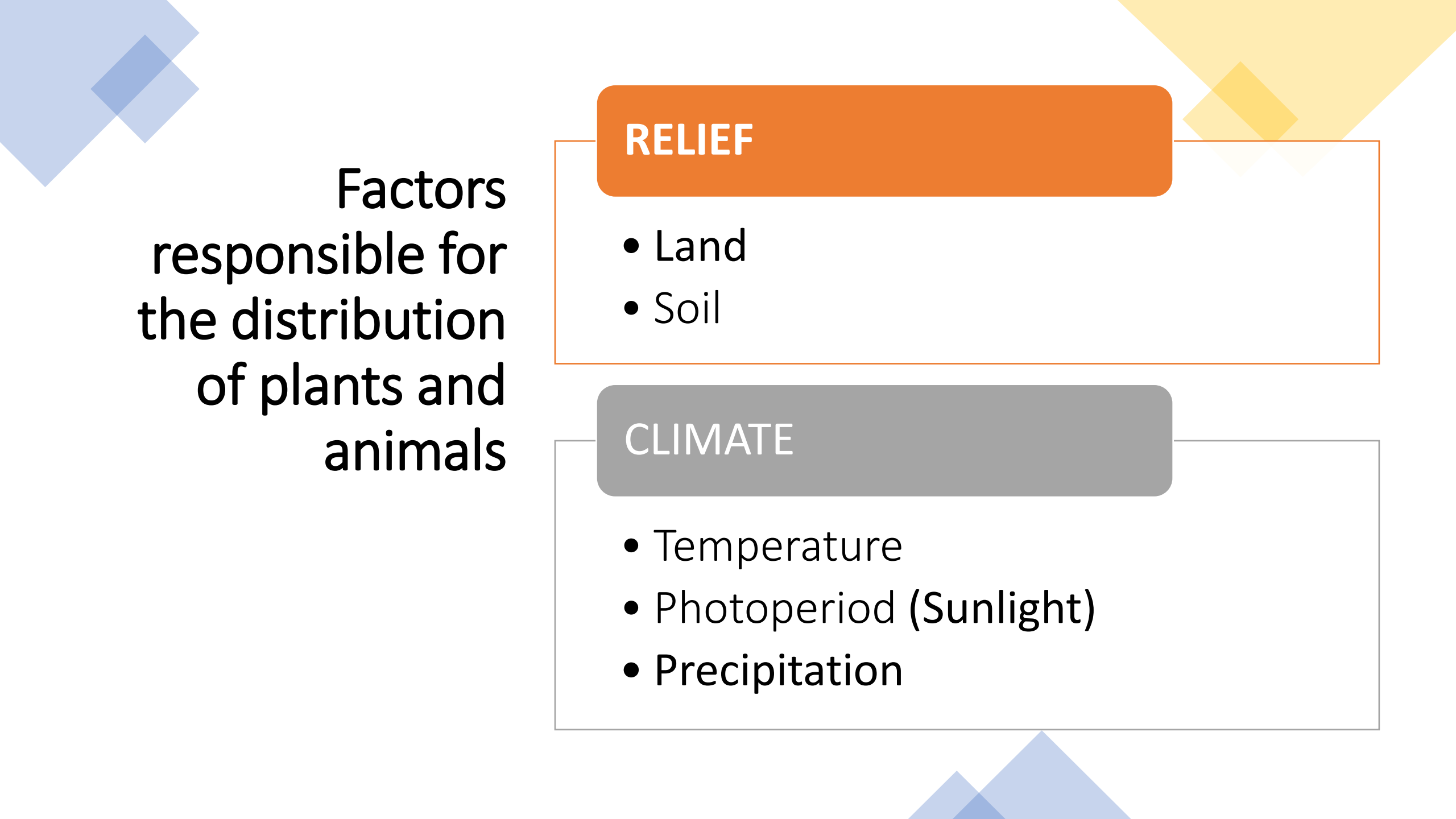
Do you know?

India's natural vegetation has undergone many changes due to several factors, such as -

the growing demand for cultivated land

development of industries and mining

urbanisation and over-grazing of pastures



Factors responsible for the distribution of plants and animals

RELIEF

- Land
- Soil

CLIMATE

- Temperature
- Photoperiod (Sunlight)
- Precipitation

IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS



Forests are renewable resources and play a major role in enhancing the quality of environment.



They modify local climate, control soil erosion, regulate stream flow.



They support a variety of industries.



They provide livelihood for many communities and offer panoramic or scenic view for recreation.



They control wind force and temperature and cause rains.



They provide humus to the soil and shelter to the wildlife.

Types of vegetation

Tropical Evergreen Forests

Tropical Deciduous Forests

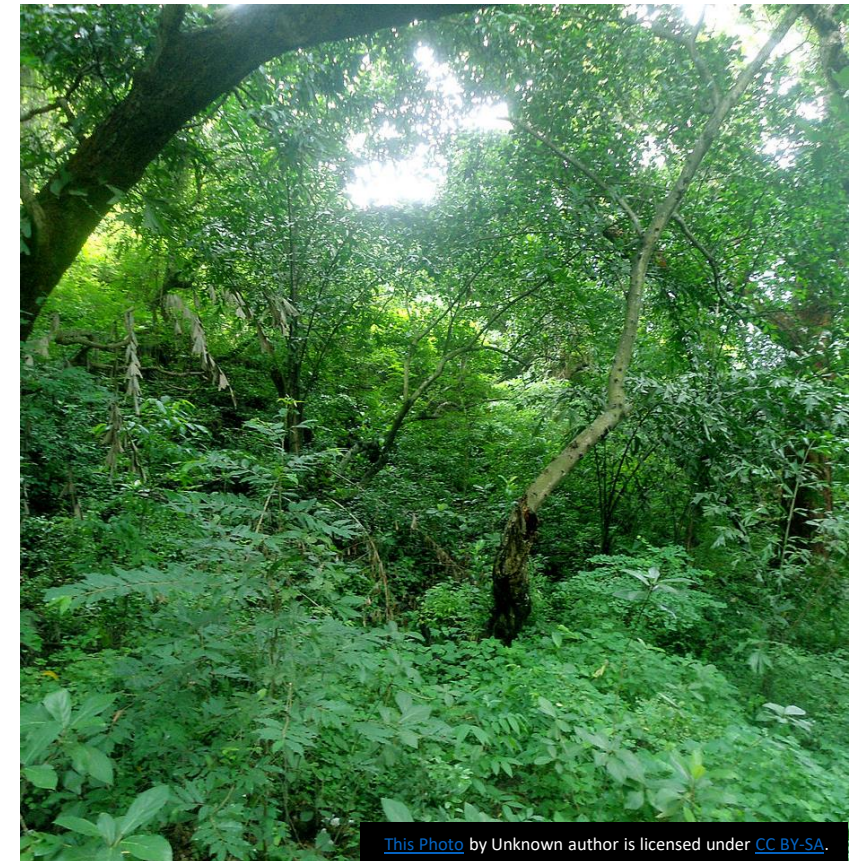
Tropical Thorn Forests and Scrubs

Montane Forests

Mangrove Forests

Tropical Evergreen Forests

- **Location** - the Western Ghats and the island groups of Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar, upper parts of Assam and Tamil Nadu coast.
- **Characteristics**- They are at their best in areas having more than 200 cm of rainfall with a short dry season.
- The trees reach great heights up to 60 metres or even above. Since the region is warm and wet throughout the year, it has a luxuriant vegetation of all kinds — trees, shrubs and creepers giving it a multilayered structure.
- There is no definite time for trees to shed their leaves. As such, these forests appear green all the year round.



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TREES AND ANIMALS

- **Important trees-** Some of the commercially important trees of this forest are ebony, mahogany, rosewood, rubber and cinchona.
- **Common animals-** The common animals found in these forests are elephant, monkey, lemur and deer. One horned rhinoceroses are found in the jungles of Assam and West Bengal. Besides these animals, plenty of birds, bats, sloth, scorpions and snails are also found in these jungles.



Tropical Deciduous Forests

- These are the most widespread forests of India. They are also called the monsoon forests and spread over the region receiving rainfall between 200 cm and 70 cm.
- Trees of this forest type shed their leaves for about six to eight weeks in dry summer.
- On the basis of the availability of water, these forests are further divided into moist and dry deciduous.
- Bamboos, sal, shisham, teak, peepal and neem are important trees.
- The common animals found are lion, tiger, pig, deer and elephant. A huge variety of birds, lizards, snakes and tortoises are also found here.



Types of Tropical Deciduous Forests

Moist Tropical Deciduous Forests

Rainfall between 200 and 100 cm.

Jharkhand, West Odisha and Chhattisgarh

Teak, Bamboos, sal, shisham, sandalwood etc.

Dry Tropical Deciduous Forests

Rainfall between 100 cm and 70 cm.

Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sal, peepal and neem

Thorn Forests and Scrubs

In regions with less than 70 cm of rainfall, the natural vegetation consists of thorny trees and bushes.

Trees are scattered and have long roots penetrating deep into the soil in order to get moisture.

The stems are succulent to conserve water. Leaves are mostly thick and small to minimise evaporation. These forests give way to thorn forests and scrubs in arid areas.

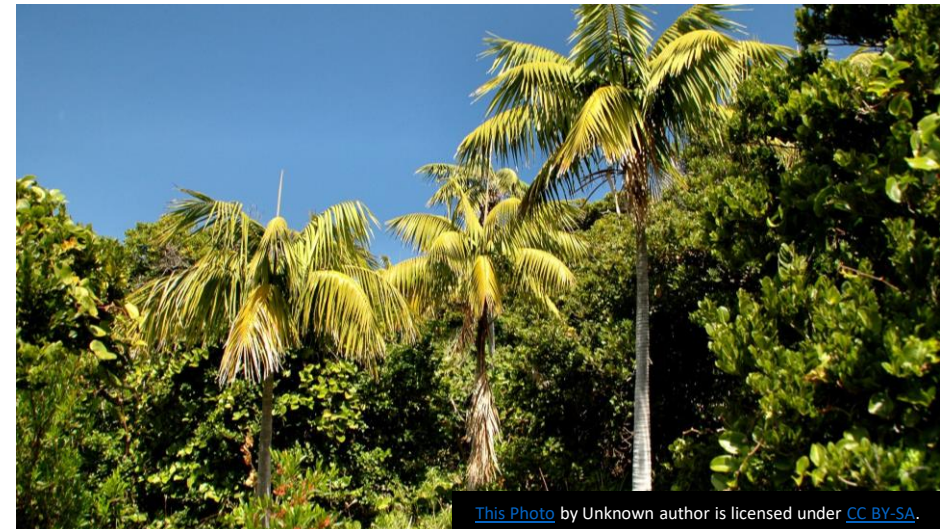


Trees and Animals

This type of vegetation is found in the north-western part of the country, including semi-arid areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Acacias, palms, euphorbias and cacti are the main plant species.

In these forests, the common animals are rats, mice, rabbits, fox, wolf, tiger, lion, wild ass, horses and camels.



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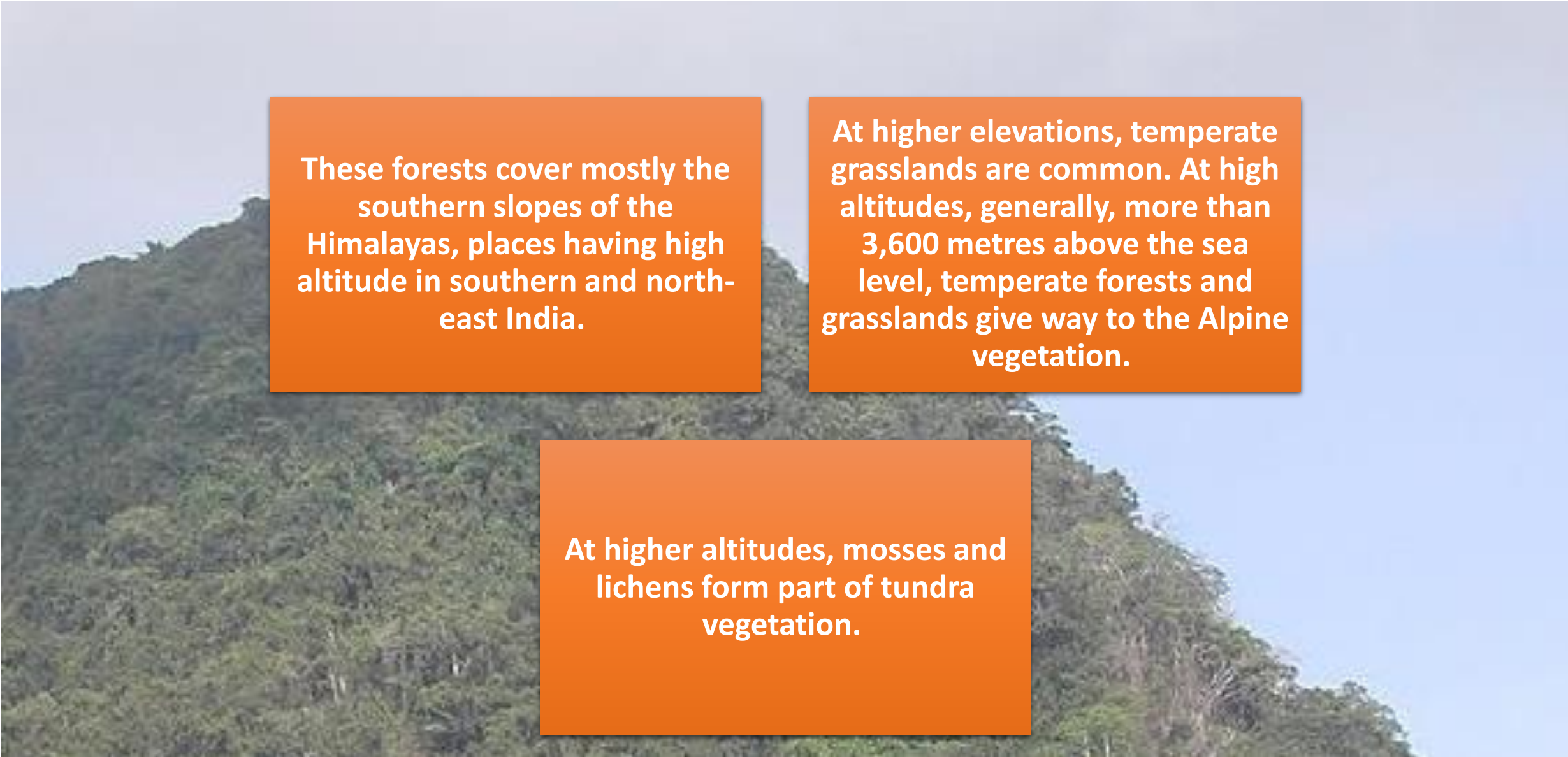
Montane Forests

In mountainous areas, the decrease in temperature with increasing altitude leads to the corresponding change in natural vegetation. As such, there is a succession of natural vegetation belts in the same order as we see from the tropical to the tundra region

The wet temperate type of forests is found between a height of 1000 and 2000 metres.

Evergreen broad-leaf trees, such as oaks and chestnuts predominate. Between 1500 and 3000 metres, temperate forests containing coniferous trees, like pine, deodar, silver fir, spruce and cedar, are found.

Montane Forests



These forests cover mostly the southern slopes of the Himalayas, places having high altitude in southern and north-east India.

At higher elevations, temperate grasslands are common. At high altitudes, generally, more than 3,600 metres above the sea level, temperate forests and grasslands give way to the Alpine vegetation.

At higher altitudes, mosses and lichens form part of tundra vegetation.

Mangrove Forests

- The Mangrove tidal forests are found in the areas of coasts influenced by tides. Mud and silt get accumulated on such coasts.
- Dense mangroves are the common varieties with roots of the plants submerged under water.
- The deltas of the Ganga, the Mahanadi, the Krishna, the Godavari and the Kaveri are covered by such vegetation.
- In the Ganga - Brahmaputra delta, sundari trees are found, which provide durable hard timber. Palm, coconut, keora, agar, etc., also grow in some parts of the delta.
- Royal Bengal Tiger is the famous animal in these forests. Turtles, crocodiles, gharials and snakes are also found in these forests.



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Like its flora, India is also rich in its fauna.

It has approximately 90,000 animal species.

The country has about 2,000 species of birds.

They constitute 13% of the world's total.

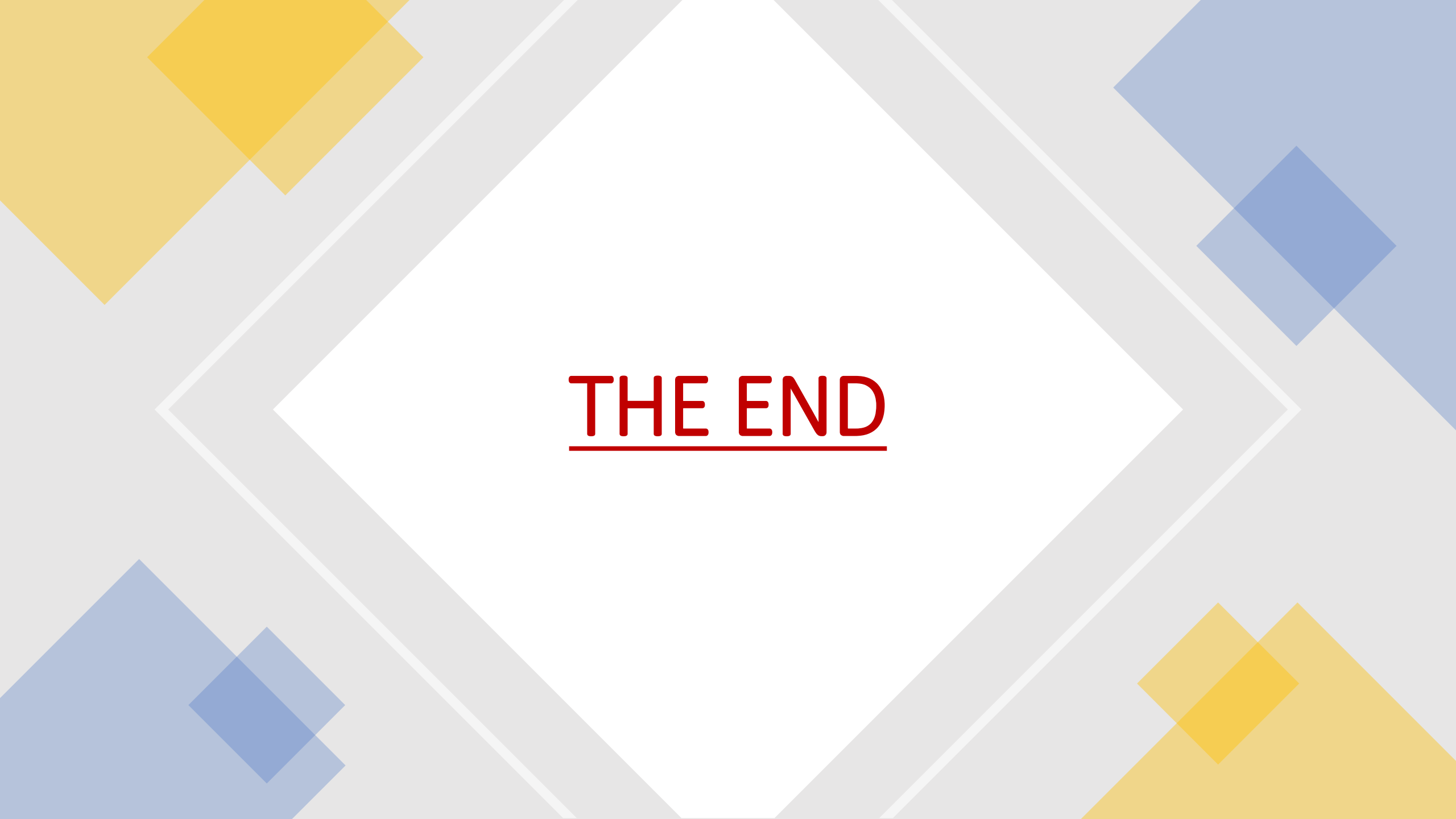
There are 2,546 species of fish, which account for nearly 12% of the world's stock.

It also shares between 5 and 8 per cent of the world's amphibians, reptiles and mammals.



Steps taken by the government to protect the flora and fauna of the country

- **103 National Parks, Eighteen biosphere reserves and 535 Wildlife sanctuaries and Zoological gardens have been set up to take care of natural heritage.**
- **These have been established by the government to protect the flora and fauna of the country.**
- **Financial and technical assistance is provided to many botanical gardens by the government since 1992.**
- **Project Tiger, Project Rhino, Project Great Indian Bustard and many other eco-developmental projects have been introduced.**



THE END