



Study Advocates Removal of Exotic Plant Species

[Source: TH](#)

A recent study conducted by the **Kerala State Forest Protective Staff Organisation (KSFPSO)**, an association of frontline forest officers highlights the importance of **removing exotic [plant species](#) from forests** to ensure ample food for wild animals, particularly elephants, at Chinnakkanal in Munnar, Kerala.

- The KSFPSO emphasises the necessity of removing exotic species like ***Acacia mearnsii* (black wattle)** and ***Eucalyptus* (*Eucalyptus teriticornis*)** from forest areas to mitigate [human-elephant conflicts](#).
 - Exotic plants **inhibit the growth of other species** and restrict animal movement, leading to **food scarcity for wildlife**.
 - Changing these areas to natural grasslands will provide food and water for wild elephants at Chinnakkanal and improve the landscape.
- The Chinnakkanal landscape is overrun by **West Indian Lantana (kongini)**, hindering the growth of diverse vegetation and posing challenges for animal access.
- **Nearly 4,000 hectares of forestland** in the district are **affected by exotic species**, impacting prey availability and consequently attracting predators like [tigers](#) and [leopards](#) to adjacent areas.

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INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Invasive alien species are non-native organisms introduced outside their natural habitat, posing economic, environmental, and health risks.

Definition as per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

- Species which is not native to India, and whose introduction or spread may threaten or adversely impact wildlife or its habitat
- Includes animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms

Characteristics

- Introduction via natural or human intervention
- Survive on native food resources
- Reproduce at a fast rate
- Edge out native species in the competition over resources

Invasive Species Worldwide

"1 in 10 species on the IUCN Red List are threatened by invasive species"

- Water Hyacinth:** Top global land invasive species
- Lantana & Black Rat:** 2nd and 3rd most widespread invaders

African catfish, Nile tilapia, red-bellied piranha, and alligator gar dominate the list of invasive wildlife in India

- Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2023 Report:** 37,000 established alien species worldwide, 200 new species introduced annually

Invasive Species	Impact
African Catfish (<i>Clarias gariepinus</i>)	Preys on waterfowl and migratory birds in Keoladeo Park, Rajasthan, a UNESCO site
Rough Cocklebur (<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>)	Severe threat to agriculture field crops such as soybeans, cotton, maize, etc.
Cotton Mealy Bug (<i>Phenacoccus solenopsis</i>)	Causes severe yield losses in Deccan cotton crops
Vilayati Kikar (<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>)	Mexican invasive species, dominates Delhi Ridge, posing severe harm as sole thriving vegetation
Eucalyptus	Tipu Sultan introduced Australian Eucalyptus to India, is non-invasive but allelopathic, hindering native species growth
Subabul (<i>River tamarind</i>)	Introduced for fuel and fodder, responsible for depleting groundwater level

INITIATIVES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Global

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1975)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (1979)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)

India

- Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order (2003)
- National Biodiversity Action Plan (2008) (Target 4)
- National Action Plan on Invasive Alien Species (NAPINVAS) (2021-25)



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Read more: [Invasive Alien Species](#) , [Planting of Exotic Trees in Nilgiris is Harmful](#)

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