



Conservation is the protection of nature or historic buildings and the careful use of natural things. This includes fauna (animals), flora (plants), water (oceans, rivers, lakes, wetlands, etc.), soil, the landscape, air and other natural resources. Conservationists are people who promote the preservation of areas which are significant—scientifically or culturally—in their natural state. They aim to do this by putting practices in place which result in minimal impact on the environment. Our environment is our most valuable resource, as it holds the key to our survival.

Conserving the environment is extremely important today, as people have had an impact on it to such an extent that the damage will take years to repair—some damage may not be able to be repaired at all. Some of the ways people have damaged the environment are:

- littering public places, including recreational areas and nature reserves
- polluting waterways, including beaches, the wider ocean, rivers, lakes and wetlands
- using up nonrenewable resources such as coal, oil and gas
- destroying native vegetation to make way for roads, residential, and industrial areas, thereby threatening native animals and plants
- farming methods which have led to areas known as “dust bowls,” as well as increased salt in the soil, resulting in land useless for animals, plants and people
- overusing water supplies
- polluting the atmosphere, which directly affects people’s health.

There are many ways people and governments can conserve the environment. Some of these are explained below.

1. National parks and reserves, both land and marine, protect the environment, yet still allow people to see and enjoy the natural beauty. Each national park has specific rules visitors must follow, such as not feeding the animals, not disturbing or removing the animals and plants, and driving only on designated roads.

2. Groups such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Greenpeace and the WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) aim to build awareness of environmental issues and to make sure environmental rules are followed by people, governments and industries.
3. Zoos and wildlife parks incorporate captive breeding programs for particular threatened and endangered species. They also aim to inform and educate people about these issues and to involve them in conservation.
4. People can change their lifestyles to meet the needs of the environment and lessen the negative impact on it. Some of these changes include:
 - Saving energy by buying energy-efficient electrical goods, turning off unnecessary lights and insulating the home.
 - Saving water by fixing leaking faucets and following garden watering restrictions.
 - Riding a bike, walking or using public transportation to save nonrenewable gasoline.
 - Recycling waste such as glass, aluminum, plastics and newspapers.
 - Donating blankets, furniture and unwanted clothes to charity organizations.

