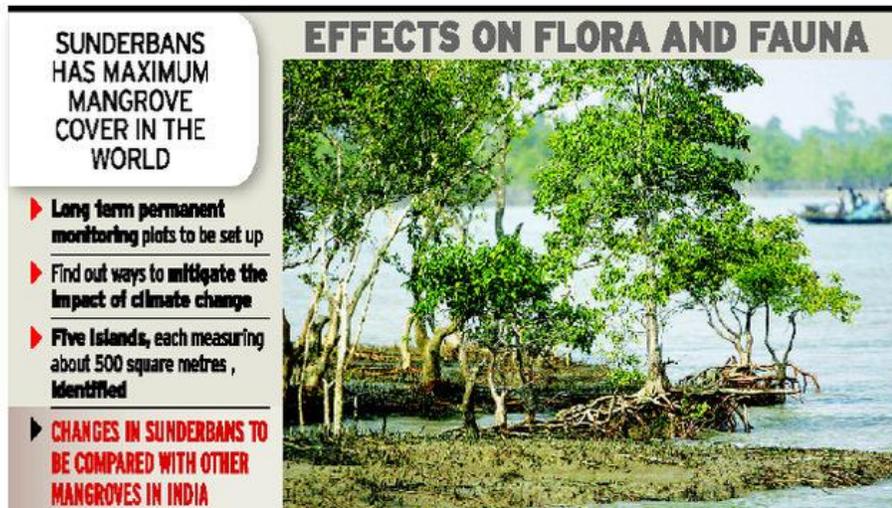


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Impact of climate change to be examined in Sunderbans

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: The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has proposed to set up long-term permanent monitoring plots in Sunderbans, a world heritage site, having maximum mangrove cover in the world to study the impacts of climate change on its flora and fauna.

“The purpose of setting up the long-term permanent monitoring plots in Sunderbans is to come up with a strategic action plan for Sunderban Mangroves, along with finding out ways to mitigate the effect of climate change,” ZSI director K Venakataram told *The Hindu*.

Mr Venkatraman said that this is the first attempt of setting up permanent monitoring plots in a mangrove ecosystem in the country. The ZSI has set up a similar long-term permanent monitoring system in Andaman Nicobar islands along with Malvan coast in Maharashtra to study the impacts of climate change of coral reefs.

Phenology

The ZSI is collaborating with the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) to study phenology (periodic life cycle events of plants influenced by variations of climate) of the flora of the Sunderbans.

Scientists at the ZSI said that research is in tune with the policies of the Government of India. Recently the Ministry of Environment of Forest has changed its name to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change with a mandate to study the climate change and mitigate its effects.

Providing details of the project, Bulganin Mitra officer-in charge, Lepidoptera section of the ZSI said that five islands were identified for the setting up of permanent monitoring plots.

“We have identified Bali, Gosaba, Basanti, Sagar and Satjhelia as the five islands where the plots will be set up. Five plots measuring about 500 square metres will be set up in each of the islands,” Mr Mitra said.

Once work on the long-term permanent monitoring plots starts in the five islands, the researches will try to have a similar facility in the core are of the Sunderban forest, Mr Mitra said.

Scientists claim that so far research carried out in the Sunderbans has been of short duration where researchers go to the islands and collect samples on a random basis.

By establishing various research zones in different areas of Sunderbans researchers can compare the changes in Sunderbans to those happening in other mangrove areas of the country.