

4. There has been a decrease of 741 sq km of forest cover within the Recorded Forest Area/Green Wash (RFA/GW) in the tribal districts.
5. Increase in the tree cover
 - a. **Maharashtra** has the highest increase in tree cover.
6. **Mangrove cover** in the country has increased by 54 sq km as compared to the previous assessment.
7. **Total Carbon Stock** of the country has increased by 42.6% compared to the last assessment.
8. **Gujarat** has the highest number of wetlands within the Recorded Forest Area (RFA).
9. The analysis revealed that 21.40% of the country's forest cover is extremely fire prone.
10. **Special Features in ISFR 2019**
 - a. Includes the "extent of trees outside forest (TOF)"
 - b. Assesses "plant biodiversity in forests"
 - c. Provides for "refined forest type map of India"
 - d. Maps "fire prone forest areas"
 - e. Includes "wetlands in forest areas"
 - f. Provides information on "forest cover on slopes"
 - g. Lists "major invasive species"
 - h. Lists "important NTFP species"

The **State of World's Forests (SOFO) 2020 report** is published by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The report assesses the progress to date in meeting global targets and goals related to forest biodiversity and examines the effectiveness of policies, actions and approaches, in terms of both conservation and sustainable development outcomes.

The report focusses on combining conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity to create balanced solutions for both people and the planet.

Due to increasing population, pressure on forest resources have increased. This has led to **higher frequency of forest fires**. In general, forest fires play an important role in forest ecosystem. It helps recycle nutrients, remove invasive species and maintain habitat for some wildlife. In a way, forest fire helps in better regeneration of tree species.

However, as the cycle of fire has spun out of balance, forest fires have become a global concern. Forest fires have drastic impacts like:

1. It releases billions of tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere, thus aggravating global warming.
2. Habitats of several animals are destroyed.
3. Exposure to smoke from forest fires has led to various health issues in humans.
4. Forest fires also have a major impact on the micro-climate, thus affecting local weather and precipitation patterns.

Some of the **reasons for forest fires** include:

1. Natural causes include thunderstorms, volcanic eruptions.
2. Dry deciduous forest in India faces 5 to 6 months of dry period and are vulnerable to fires.
3. Man-made causes include slash and burn cultivation practiced in North-East India. Also, many a times, people visiting forests would leave behind inflammable materials like burning bidis, thus causing fire.

Australian Bushfire was the most devastating bushfire faced by Australia in at least 20 years. Although bushfires are common in Australia, the spread and intensity of 2020 bushfire was never seen before. Some of the reasons for the 2020 bushfire in Australia includes:

1. Prolonged drought in the region.