**Nature and scope of environmental geography and its present significance**

Environmental geography is a branch of geography that focuses on the interactions between human societies and the natural environment, including the physical, biological, and cultural processes that shape landscapes and ecosystems. It examines how human activities impact the environment and how environmental factors influence human societies. The nature and scope of environmental geography encompass various aspects, including:

1. **Physical Environment**: Environmental geography studies the physical processes and features of the Earth's surface, such as landforms, climate, soils, hydrology, and ecosystems. It explores how these physical factors interact and influence environmental patterns and processes.
2. **Human-Environment Interactions**: Environmental geography investigates the complex interactions between human societies and the natural environment. It examines how human activities, such as agriculture, urbanization, industrialization, resource extraction, and pollution, impact ecosystems, landscapes, and natural resources.
3. **Spatial Analysis**: Environmental geography employs spatial analysis techniques to understand the spatial patterns and distribution of environmental phenomena, such as land use, biodiversity, pollution, and natural hazards. Geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing are commonly used tools in environmental geography for mapping, analyzing, and modeling environmental data.
4. **Environmental Conservation and Management**: Environmental geography plays a crucial role in the conservation and management of natural resources and ecosystems. It assesses the impacts of human activities on the environment, identifies areas of ecological importance, and develops strategies for sustainable resource use, habitat conservation, biodiversity conservation, and environmental protection.
5. **Environmental Hazards and Risks**: Environmental geography examines natural hazards such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and human-induced hazards such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change. It assesses the vulnerability of human populations and ecosystems to these hazards and develops strategies for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and adaptation.
6. **Global Environmental Issues**: Environmental geography addresses pressing global environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification, water scarcity, air and water pollution, and habitat degradation. It explores the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to these issues, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental processes and the need for international cooperation and sustainable development.
7. **Cultural and Political Ecology**: Environmental geography examines the cultural, social, economic, and political factors that influence human-environment relationships. It explores how cultural beliefs, values, institutions, and power dynamics shape environmental perceptions, behaviors, and decision-making processes at local, national, and global scales.

The present significance of environmental geography lies in its role in addressing urgent environmental challenges facing the planet, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing environmental stewardship. By understanding the complex interactions between human societies and the natural environment, environmental geography contributes to informed decision-making, environmental policy formulation, ecosystem management, and conservation efforts aimed at achieving a more sustainable and resilient future.