

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:405

ANSWERED ON:24.02.2010

DECLINING POPULATION OF GANGETIC DOLPHIN

Gandhi Smt. Maneka Sanjay

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether according to the latest Report of International Union for Conservation of Nature, the number of Gangetic Dolphin had declined 50% in the last five decades and less than 2000 survive today;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the First Information Reports have been registered against poachers of Gangetic Dolphin;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the projects that have been implemented by the Government to save these endangered species during each of the last three years and the current year?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a)&(b) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has reported that there has been a decline of about 50% in the Gangetic Dolphin population. Population estimates reported by IUCN in 2008 show that lower range of the total metapopulation abundance for Gangetic Dolphin is 1200-1800. However, the true numbers would be several times as high, because areas with potentially large numbers of animals have not been accounted in the above estimation. The main reasons for decline in population of the species are poaching, habitat degradation, heavy siltation, construction of barrages causing physical barrier for this migratory species, toxic contaminants and entrapment in fishing gear.

(c)&(d) As per the information available in the Ministry, the State Government of Bihar has reported filing one case under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 against the poachers of Gangetic Dolphin during 2009-2010 in Patna by the State Forest Department.

(e) Under the existing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' and 'Project Tiger', financial assistance is provided to State/UTs Governments for conservation and protection of wildlife including Gangetic Dolphins. Presently, there is no special project for Gangetic Dolphin. However under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', Gangetic Dolphin has been identified as one of the species for recovery.