

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:378

ANSWERED ON:21.04.2010

EXTINCTION OF BIRDS AND ANIMALS

Choudhary Shri Nikhil Kumar;Singh Baba Shri K.C.

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

- (a) whether some of the species of animals and birds are on the verge of extinction in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor and its impact on environment and forests;
- (c) whether any team of experts has been constituted by the Government in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial steps taken by the Government to address the issue?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d) & (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 378 REGARDING "EXTINCTION OF BIRDS AND ANIMALS" BY SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHOUDHARY AND SHRI K.C. SINGH 'BABA' DUE FOR REPLY ON 21-04-2010.

(a)&(b) The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has reported that a total of 560 species of animals and plants are threatened in India. Out of these a total of 313 species are animals, while 247 are plant species. Amongst the animals, the number of reported threatened species in India is as follows:

- 1. Mammal : 89
- 2. Birds : 75
- 3. Reptiles : 25
- 4. Amphibians : 63
- 5. Fishes : 39
- 6. Molluscans : 2
- 7 Other invertebrates : 20

The main reasons for extinction of species of wildlife are habitat loss, poaching, clandestine trade in wildlife, lucrative prices for wildlife and its products, consumption of wild animals as food and human-wildlife conflicts. Plants and animals play important role in maintaining the ecological equilibrium. Some of the impacts of extinction of species are breaking of the continuity of the food chain, loss of important biological resources, reduction in species and genetic diversity and reduced resilience of the ecosystems.

(c)&(d) The Government had constituted two committees in 2007 for identifying the critically endangered species requiring focused attention for recovery in both terrestrial and marine habitats. These committees had identified 15 terrestrial and marine species for recovery programmes namely Snow Leopard, Sanghai Deer, Hangul, Wild Buffalo, Gangetic Dolphin, Gharial, Bustards, Jerdon's Courser, Dugong, Whale Shark, Marine Turtles, Giant Clams, Holothurians (Sea Cucumber), Horse Shoe Crab and Balanoglossus. Besides, recovery programme are also prepared for some other critically endangered species namely Vultures, Nilgiri Tahr, Edible Nest Swiftlet and Asiatic Lion.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to protect these species are as follows:

- i) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' has been modified in 2008-09 by including a new component namely 'Recovery of Endangered Species' and 15 species have been identified for recovery. Under this programme central assistance is provided to states/UT governments for recovery programmes depending upon the budgetary provisions. So far, recovery programmes for Snow leopard, Hangul, Vultures, Edible Nest Swiftlets, Nilgiri Tahr and Sanghai Deer have been funded in different states.
- ii) Legal protection has been provided to endangered wild animals and plants against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- iii) The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, has been amended and made more stringent including provisions of forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence.
- iv) Protected Areas, viz, National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves all over the country covering the important habitats have been created as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to provide for better protection to wildlife, including threatened species and their habitat.
- v) Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz, 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection and conservation to wildlife.
- vi) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.
- vii) The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas.
- viii) The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.