

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1253

ANSWERED ON:08.08.2011

DEATH OF WILD ANIMALS

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

- (a) the total number of elephants in the country and the State-wise break-up thereof;
- (b) the number of death of wild animals and persons including elephants by various reasons including train accidents reported in the country during the last three years and the current year, year-wise and State-wise;
- (c) whether his Ministry has taken up the matter with Ministry of Railways and State Authorities and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has prepared any Task Force to protect the designated key elephant corridors in various parts of the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the said Task Force has submitted their recommendations; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to check recurrence of such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

- (a) Estimated population of elephants in India, as per census of 2007-08, is 27,694. State-wise details are given in Annexure-I
- (b) Data relating to death of wild animals and persons are not compiled in the Ministry.
- (c) The incidents of death of wild elephants in train accidents have been reported from time to time from various States including Assam, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The Ministry has taken up the matter with the Ministry of Railways from time to time, and the two Ministries are working in close coordination to put in place measures to mitigate the problem of elephant death in train accidents. The measures initiated in this regard include clearing of the undergrowth near railway tracks in forest areas to increase the visibility for the train drivers, imposition of speed limits on trains in sensitive stretches prone to elephant movement, tracking of movement of elephants near railway tracks, and quick communication of information about presence of elephants to the railway authorities, construction of ramps to facilitate, and fences to prevent, the movement of elephants across the railway tracks, setting up of joint coordination committee consisting of local officers of Railways and State Forest Departments.
- (d) to (g) The Ministry had constituted a Task Force to suggest measures for more effective conservation and management of wild elephants in the country. The main recommendations of the Task Force, inter-alia, include:
 - i. Securing elephant landscapes by rationalizing boundaries of Elephant Reserves and prioritizing elephant landscapes and corridors.
 - ii. Mitigating conflict by ensuring adequate and quick relief packages and setting up standards for elephant proof trenches and fences.
 - iii. Controlling poaching and illegal trade in wildlife by filling frontline vacancies, upgarding service conditions and strengthening intelligence gathering, and wildlife crime control technologies.
 - iv. Ensuring welfare of captive elephant by phasing out elephants in captivity, monitoring and enforcing welfare standards for captive elephants, and better working conditions for mahouts.
 - v. Taking global lead in elephant conservation by hosting first Internatinal Elephant Congress in New Delhi.
 - vi. Taking Gajah to the people by declaring elephant a National Heritage Animal, initiate 'Haathi Mere Saathi' awareness campaign.

Most recommendations of the Task Force are under different stages of implementation. Initiating implementation of recommendation of the Task force along with ongoing measures under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Elephant, have kept the death of elephant in railway accidents under control.