

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:256

ANSWERED ON:12.12.2011

CONSERVATION OF FRESH WATER SPECIES IN WESTERN GHATS

Kateel Shri Nalin Kumar;Yadav Shri Ranjan Prasad

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

- (a) whether a study conducted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature(IUCN) has revealed that some fresh water species in the Western Ghats are on the verge of extinction;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons identified therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has received proposals from the concerned State Governments for financial assistance for conservation of the said species in the region;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds released in this regard;
- (e) whether the Government has any proposal to declare this bio-diversity as protected area; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the other remedial steps being taken by the Government in this direction?

Answer

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. #256 REGARDING 'CONSERVATION OF FRESH WATER SPECIES IN WESTERN GHATS' RAISED BY PROF. (DR.) RANJAN PRASAD YADAV AND SHRI NALIN KUMAR KATEEL DUE FOR REPLY ON 12.12.2011

(a) The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had carried out Red Listing assessments of the freshwater biodiversity in Western Ghats during 2010-2011. The assessment report indicates that close to 16% of the 1,146 freshwater taxa assessed are threatened with extinction.

(b) The Red Listing assessment report indicates that the main threats impacting freshwater biodiversity in the Western Ghats include:

- (a) Pollution
- (b) Biological resource use
- (c) Residential and commercial development
- (d) Dams and other natural system modifications
- (e) Agriculture and aquaculture
- (f) Energy production and mining.

(c) & (d) The State Governments in the Western Ghats region have submitted proposals for financial assistance under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the conservation and protection of wildlife and its habitat for the wildlife habitats included the Western Ghats. The details of funds released to the concerned State Government under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the year 2011-2012 are at Annexure. However, no proposal for financial assistance for conservation of specific species in the Western Ghats has been received from the concerned State Governments.

(e) & (f) As per the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, the concerned State Governments are authorized to declare biodiversity rich areas as Protected Areas. The important remedial steps taken by the Government for the protection of fresh water species in the Western Ghats include:

(i) The Government has identified 39 cluster sites in the Western Ghats for nomination as World Heritage Sites under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

(ii) Habitats of rare and endangered species are designated as Protected Areas to provide protection to the species as well as their habitat.

(iii) Financial and technical assistance is provided under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' under the components of 'Protection of wildlife outside Protected Areas' and 'Recovery programme for saving critically endangered species and habitats'.

(iv) Financial and Technical Assistance is provided to the wetlands, lakes, etc under the National Wetland Conservation Programme that has identified 18 wetlands in the Western Ghats.

(v) The non forestry activities both inside Protected Areas, and outside Protected Areas are regulated as per the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(vi) Rare and endangered species of wildlife are listed under the Schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby according them highest degree of protection.

(vii) The utilization of biological resources in the country is regulated as per the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.