

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:711

ANSWERED ON:19.03.2012

REHABILITATION OF ASIATIC LIONS

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

- (a) whether the researchers of Wildlife Institute of the country have reported that the Palpur-Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh is the appropriate place to rehabilitate the Asiatic Lions;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the recommendations made by them in this regard and the amount of funds spent on each work done;
- (c) the details of steps taken by the Government to rehabilitate the Asiatic Lions; and
- (d) the time by which the lions are likely to be rehabilitated?

Answer

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

(a) to (c): Wildlife Institute of India carried out a survey for identifying potential sites for relocation of Asiatic lions to alternative areas outside Gir, Gujarat. Three sites, namely Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary, JawaharSagar Sanctuary, and Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan and Kuno-Palpur Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh were identified for lion introduction. Out of these four, Kuno-Palpur Sanctuary was found to be the most suitable site on account of its area, shape and vegetation. In its report submitted in 1995, the Wildlife Institute of India recommended the following actions to be taken up before relocating lions to the area:

- (i) Complete acceptance of the proposal for lion relocation by the concerned State Governments, as well as the Central Government;
- (ii) Initiating an awareness and eco-development scheme in the Kuno-Palpur area to elicit support and participation of location community to the relocation of lions;
- (iii) Establishment of the Kuno National Park over an area of approximately 700 sq. km. involving translocation of all human settlements from the National Park area and stoppage of livestock grazing therein;
- (iv) Establishing a special team of adequately trained forest department personnel to implement the scheme and to ensure adequate protection to the area;
- (v) Undertaking habitat improvement measures including weed removal, and enhancing the availability and distribution of water;
- (vi) Augmentation of the resident wild ungulate population by additional release of chital and nilgai to build up an adequate prey base for the reintroduced lions.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has so far released an amount of Rs. 1545.00 lakh to the State Government of Madhya Pradesh for rehabilitation of 1545 families from the Kuno-Palpur Sanctuary. An amount of Rs. 168.435 lakhs has been released during the last three years to the State Government of Madhya Pradesh to take up various measures for improvement of habitat and management of the Sanctuary.

- (d) No specific time limit has been fixed for the relocation of lions.