

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:904
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009
DECLINING POPULATION OF RIVER DOLPHIN
Singh Shri Rakesh;Viswanathan Shri P.

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the declining population of River Dolphin in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has any proposal to declare River Dolphin as National Aquatic Animal;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to protect and increase the population of River Dolphin?

Answer

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

- (a) & (b) River dolphin is critically endangered species in India and therefore, has been included in the Schedule I for the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The main reasons for decline in population of the species are poaching and habitat degradation due to declining flow, heavy siltation, construction of barrages causing physical barrier for this migratory species.
- (c)&(d) During the first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) held on 5th October 2009, under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister, it was decided to declare River Dolphin as National Aquatic Animal.
- (e) The important steps taken to protect River Dolphins are as given below:
 - (i) River Dolphins have been included in the Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby affording them the highest degree of protection.
 - (ii) The important habitats of river dolphins have been declared as Protected Areas for their conservation.
 - (iii) Financial & technical assistance is provided to the State Governments under Centrally Sponsored Schemes for conservation and protection of wildlife including dolphins and their habitat.
 - (iv) Financial assistance is provided for conducting scientific research on the habitat, behavior, population status of river dolphins.