

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3659

ANSWERED ON:03.09.2012

THREAT TO ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Chanabasappa Shri Udasi Shivkumar;Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun;Vishwanath Shri Adagur H

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

- (a) whether the Botanical Survey of India has conducted any survey/assessment of plants, herbs, shrubs that are on the verge of extinction;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is also preparing a similar list of endangered animals in the country and if so, the details thereof ; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to preserve those rare plants and to check the illicit-trade and smuggling of such plants and animals?

Answer

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

- (a) Yes, Botanical Survey of India, with its mandate of Floristic survey, documentation and status assessment of all plant species, has also been conducting floristic surveys for threat (anthropogenic/natural) assessment and inventorying of threatened species.
- (b) Based on studies of vast herbarium repository of dried plant material maintained by the department and verified by field survey tours, BSI has already published four volumes of Red Data Book of Indian Plants, (Eds. Jain & Rao, 1984; Nayar & Sastry 1987 – 1990) and Red List of Threatened Vascular Plant Species in India (Rao et al. 2003), which provides information on 1236 threatened plant taxa in the country.
- (c) Zoological Survey of India with its headquarters and Kolkata and 16 Regional Centers, covering all biogeographic zones and ecosystems of India conduct faunal surveys including status survey of rare, endangered, endemic and threatened animals. The results of the survey are regularly published and communicated to Government agencies. Hitherto status survey of 10 species of animals has been published by ZSI. The results from these studies are incorporated in conservation management of these species.
- (d) Action taken by the government to check illicit trade and smuggling of endangered animals and plant in the country includes:
 - i. Species of plants or animals which are assessed to be threatened are included in the appropriate schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby providing them statutory protection against unregulated exploitation.
 - ii. Hunting and commercial exploitation of wild animals included in various schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 is prohibited. Offences committed in respect of these species attract punishment prescribed under the Act.
 - iii. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, has been amended and made more stringent. The punishments for offences have been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).
 - iv. Protected Areas, viz., National Park, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.
 - v. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection to wildlife and improvement of its habitat.
 - vi. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.
 - vii. The State/Union Territory 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 to strengthen the enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

ix. Under the Central Sponsored Scheme – 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', a component has been added for initiating 'Recovery Programme for critically endangered species and their habitats" during the 11th Five Year plan period.

x. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora" (CITES) that regulates international trade in wildlife and its derivatives.

xi. Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act empowers the Central Government in consultation with the concerned State Governments to notify from time to time any species which is on the verge of extinction or likely to become extinct in the near future as a threatened species, and prohibit or regulate their collection, and also to take appropriate steps to rehabilitate and preserve those species. For implementation of these provisions, the Government has got prepared, through the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), a state-wise list of threatened species of plants and animals which are on the verge of extinction, along with guidelines for prohibiting or regulating collection of these species, as also measures for rehabilitating and preserving them. This list was sent to the State Governments for comments/approval in October 2008. Upon receipt of comments, notifications have been issued so far for fourteen States: Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, Mizoram, Orissa and Meghalaya, Goa and West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tripura, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The matter is being pursued with the remaining states.