

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4481
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2013
PROTECTION OF WILD BUFFALOES
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the number of wild buffalos in the various sanctuaries of the country is decreasing continuously;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to protect and increase the number of wild buffalos?

Answer

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

(a)&(b) Asian wild buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*), once widely distributed over the tract of tall grasslands and reverine forests in India and Nepal, is presently found only in two States in few scattered wildlife protected areas namely Kaziranga and Manas National Parks in Assam and Indravati National Park and Udanti, Sitanadi, Bhairamgarh and Pamed Sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh with the estimated population of less than 2000. Despite well protected and managed protected areas population of wild buffalo are declining in north-eastern India and Central India (Chhattisgarh). However, population of wild buffalo in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve has increased considerably. The reasons for decline in the population of wild buffalo are habitat fragmentation due to diversions, degradation, hunting, competition and diseases transmitted by domestic livestock.

(c) Steps taken to protect and increase the number of wild buffalos includes:

- i. The wild buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby under the highest degree of protection.
- ii. Active protection and adoption of appropriate conservation strategies are being taken in Protected Areas harbouring wild buffalo population.
- iii. Financial assistance is being provided to the State Government of Chhattisgarh under the component 'Recovery programme for critically endangered species' of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' for recovery of wild buffalo population in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary.
- iv. A joint project is being executed by the Chhattisgarh Forest Department and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) to stabilise the wild buffalo population in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary, Chhattisgarh.