

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:222
ANSWERED ON:26.08.2013
DECLINING POPULATION OF WILDLIFE
Pradhan Shri Nityananda

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

- (a) whether the population of wild animals especially lions, elephants etc. is declining in the country including in the forests of Odisha;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b) AND (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.222 REGARDING 'DECLINING POPULATION OF WILDLIFE' BY SHRI NITYANANDA PRADHAN DUE FOR REPLY ON 26.8.2013.

(a) & (b) No decline in the population of major species like Lions and Elephants in the country including in the forests of Odisha have been reported. In fact, their population has increased. As per the latest information available in the Ministry, the estimated population of Lions has increased from 359+ 10 in 2005 to 411 in 2010. The population of elephants has increased from 27669-27719 in 2007 to 29391-30711 in 2012.

(c) The important steps taken by the Government for protection of endangered species of wild animals including lions and elephants in the country include:

- i. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ii. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides stringent punishment for offences under the Act. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).
- iii. Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, 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.
- iv. In order to provide specific focus on the conservation of tiger and elephant, Project Tiger and Project Elephant are functional in the respective Range States.
- 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 Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to strengthen the intelligence gathering and enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.
- viii. Joint Advisories have been issued by Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Railways to all the concerned states to avoid death of elephants by speeding trains.
- ix. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests.