

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2962  
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014  
PROTECTION OF FOREST OWLETS  
Bishnoi Shri Kuldeep

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the experiments are being performed on critically endangered forest owl and (Heteroglaux Blewitti) for research purposes which are around Melghat Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government for protection of said species of Birds?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (Dr. M. VEERAPPA MOILY)

(a) and (b) The Central Government, Ministry of Environment and Forests, has granted permission in January 2013 to Wildlife Research and Conservation Society, Pune, under Section 12 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for capture of 20 Forest Owllet from outside Protected Areas of East and West Melghat Forest Division in the state of Maharashtra for the purpose of research, and subject to certain conditions. These birds are to be ringed with coloured bands around the legs and thereafter to be released for study of the ecological aspects. The permission was granted after duly considering the recommendation of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) And Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra.

(c) The Forest Spotted Owllet has been included in the Schedule – I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby granting it the highest degree of protection.

Further, the important general steps taken by the Government for protection of endangered animals and birds 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. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/ Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats` for providing better protection to wildlife and improvement of its habitat.
- v. Financial support is provided to the research institutions for undertaking studies which help better management and conservation of species.
- 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. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests and wildlife.