

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5634
ANSWERED ON:28.04.2015
PROTECTION OF LEOPARDS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any study has been conducted by the Government or any agency on the habitation of leopards in the country and if so, the details and outcome thereof;
- (b) the total number of leopards in the country, State-wise;
- (c) whether the number of leopards in the country is declining and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether poaching/illegal killing is the main reasons for the declining number of leopards and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps being taken to protect the leopards in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (c) There is no single country wide study on habitation of leopard conducted by the Government or any agency. However, under the All India Monitoring of Tiger, Co-predators, Prey and habitat, field data (direct sightings and indirect evidences) for information on habitat occupancy and population estimate of leopard has been collected from forested habitats in Tiger range States by the Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with State Forest Departments. The All India Tiger Monitoring Report (2010) provides information on habitat occupancy by leopards in 13 States.

The study indicates that the total area occupied by leopards has shown overall decrease, with several States showing increase and several others showing decrease. However, there are no estimates of population trend. No organised population estimation of leopards has been undertaken in the country.

(d) In view of (a) to (c) above, the question does not arise. However, the seizures made in the offences related to illegal trade of parts for cat family animals show indications of illegal killing of leopard in the country.

(e) The Government has taken the following steps for protection and conservation of wild animals including leopards in the country:

i. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including leopards against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

ii. In addition to provision of stringent punishment for the offenders, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 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 including leopards 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', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection to wildlife, and improvement of its habitat.

v. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

vi. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to ensure co-ordination among various officers and State Governments in connection with the enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

vii. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests and Wildlife.