

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3651

ANSWERED ON:11.08.2015

Extinction of Fish Species

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

- (a) whether naturally found fishes especially Humpback Masheerfish are on the verge of extinction due to the release of the fishes developed by artificial breeding into the rivers ;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard along with the other reasons for the extinction of the said fishes ; and
- (c) the efforts being made by the Government for the conservation of the said species of fish ?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The surveys and studies conducted by ZSI indicate that Deccan Mahaseer (Tor khudree) is distributed in central and peninsular India as well as in Sri Lanka and the Hump-backed Mahaseer (Tor mussullah or currently Hypselo barbussullah, endemic to the Western Ghats) co-habit the peninsular Indian river systems (both the east and west flowing river systems) of the Western Ghats with the Deccan Mahaseer. The species of Mahaseers are inhabitants of clear fast-flowing, montane streams and rivers, and are very sensitive to siltation, water pollution and other habitat changes. Both the Deccan and Hump-backed Mahaseers are rare fishes exhibiting a declining trend in their populations. Of these two species, the Hump-backed Mahaseer is the rarer one with very restricted distribution in their habitat range.

The Mahaseers in the peninsular Indian river system are under threat due to various anthropogenic interferences like pollution, fishing pressure, poaching, habitat degradation and water abstraction. Sufficient scientific evidences are lacking to state that hump-backed Mahaseer fish is on the verge of extinction, especially due to the release of fishes developed by artificial breeding into the rivers.

(c) The Mahaseer fishes are not included in any schedule of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, but are assessed as 'Endangered' by IUCN. However, the habitats falling within the protected boundaries of conservation areas like National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and the wild fish populations in the aquatic systems therein, are protected under the law.
