

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3473**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.03.2018

**Population of Vultures**

3473. DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT:  
SHRI SATAV RAJEEV:  
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:  
SHRI MOHITE PATIL  
VIJAYSINH SHANKARRAO:  
SHRI P.R. SUNDARAM:

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

- (a) the number of vultures in the country at present, State-wise;
- (b) whether there has been a sharp decline in the population of vultures in the country and if so, the details thereof during the last three years;
- (c) whether any Nation-wide survey has been undertaken by the Wildlife department of his Ministry to find out the reasons for the decline in the number of species of vultures in the country, and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any Vulture Breeding Centres have been set up by Government in collaboration with State Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are working for its conservation in the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the Central financial assistance sanctioned/ proposed to be sanctioned to some of the NGOs working for breeding of vultures; and
- (f) the details of the steps taken by the Government for conservation of vultures?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)**

- (a) and (b) State-wise population of vultures is not estimated and collated in this Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. However, based on the surveys on three species of critically endangered resident Gyps Vultures, namely, White backed Vulture, Long billed Vulture and Slender billed Vulture carried out in 2015 and published in 2017 by the Bombay Natural History Society, there were about 6000 White backed Vultures, 12000 Long billed Vultures and 1000 Slender billed Vultures. These three species of Vultures were very common in the country in early eighties, however, a decline in population was noticed in mid nineties and by 2007, there was a 99% decline in population of three *Gyps* species of

Vultures. The population of the vultures appeared to have stabilized by the year 2011 as the rate of decline of population has improved over the period. State-wise population of vultures is not estimated and collated in the Ministry.

- (c) Surveys carried out by State Governments with the help of Scientific organizations like Bombay Natural History Society in the country during the last decade indicate that the major cause of mortality of vultures was the use of veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac, given to cattle in pain and inflammation. The Government of India has banned the veterinary use of the drug since 2008.
- (d) and (e) Presently, there are eight Vulture breeding centres in India. The Bombay Natural History Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change manages four centres at Pinjore (Haryana), Rajabhatkhawa (West Bengal), Rani (Assam) and Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh). The other four centres at Hyderabad (Telangana), Bhubaneshwar (Odisha), Muta, Ranchi (Jharkhand) and Junagarh (Gujarat) are established in Zoos and are managed by the respective State Forest Departments.

The Ministry has released an amount of Rs. 396.822 lakhs and Rs. 79.44 lakhs to the State of Haryana and West Bengal respectively, for vulture conservation, wherein Bombay Natural History Society is managing Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres..

- (f) The important steps taken for conservation of Vultures include:
- (i) Protection status of White backed, Long billed and Slender billed Vultures have been upgraded from Schedule-IV to Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
  - (ii) Government of India has formulated a National Action Plan (2006) on Vulture Conservation. The Action Plan provides for strategies, actions for containing the decline of vulture population through *ex-situ*, *in-situ*, vulture conservation.
  - (iii) The Government of India has banned the veterinary use of the drug diclofenac which was found to be the cause of vulture mortality and crash in vulture population.
  - (iv) The Government of India has also restricted the packaging size of human formulation of the drug to 3ml in July 2015, to prevent the misuse of multi-dose vials available in 30 ml presentation in treating cattle.
  - (v) Department of forests of all States/UT's have been requested to constitute a Monitoring committee for vulture conservation with a view to implement the Action Plan 2006 and for recovery of existing vulture sites.

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