

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.907
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2018

Olive Ridley Turtles

907. SHRI B. SENGUTTUVAN:

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

- (a) whether the population of Olive Ridley Turtles, whose habitat is the Eastern Coast of India, is facing a rapid decline in the recent years, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether their habitats or colonies have been declared as sanctuaries protected under the Wild Life Protection Act, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is true that trawling is permitted in the habitats of the Olive Ridley Turtles which causes their rapid deaths, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has issued any directive insisting upon the use of Turtle Exclusive Devices in the nets used by the finishing trawlers so as to prevent the deaths of the Olive Ridley Turtles, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the proactive steps taken by the Government to prevent the large-scale killing of these animals by fishing trawlers?

ANSWER

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

- (a) As per the information received from the eastern coastal states of India, there is no decline in the population of Olive Ridley Turtles.
- (b) Yes, Madam. The areas frequented by the Olive Ridley turtles for nesting purpose have been declared as Sanctuaries/National Parks under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. List of such Sanctuaries/National Parks are as follows:
 - i. Cuthbert Bay Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - ii. Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - iii. Ross Island Wildlife Sanctuary ,
 - iv. Cinque Islands Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - v. Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - vi. Paget Island Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - vii. Kyd Island Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - viii. North Reef Island WLS,
 - ix. Patric Island Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - x. Reef Island Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - xi. East Island Wildlife Sanctuary,
 - xii. Brush Island Wildlife Sanctuary,

- xiii. Gahirmatha (Marine) Wildlife Sanctuary,
- xiv. Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary,
- xv. Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary,
- xvi. Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary,
- xvii. Pulicate Wildlife Sanctuary,
- xviii. Gulf of Mannar National Park,
- xix. Mahatama Gandhi Marine (Wandoor) National Park,
- xx. Rani Jhansi Marine National Park.

- (c) No Madam. As informed by the State Governments, trawling is not permitted in the habitats of Olive Ridley Turtle during the specified periods.
- (d) Directive has been issued by the respective State Governments for use for Turtle Excluding Devices (TED) in the nets use by the fishing trawlers. The State Fisheries and Animal Resource Development (FARD) Department, Govt. of Odisha has issued necessary directions to use Turtle Excluder Device. The Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1983 (TMFRA) directs that no trawl nets to be used without fixing TED during the specified period. The Government of Andhra Pradesh is providing TEDs to fisherman for installation purpose.
- (e) Details of steps taken by the Government to prevent the large-scale killing of these animals by fishing trawlers are:
1. There is statutory ban on fishing in the Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary area and in restricted fishing zones which is being enforced for seven months starting from 1st November each year to 31st May of next year, commensurate with the nesting season.
 2. Strict vigil on all important nesting beaches has been made by establishing on shore monitoring and surveillance camps.
 3. Off shore patrolling and surveillance camps have been set up near mass breeding and congregation areas in the sea. Patrolling squads, each under a forest Ranger, have been pressed into service from the off-shore camps for this purpose, and each squad is provided with a hired / Departmental trawler and a support patrol boat for patrolling around the turtle congregation zones in the sea. Coast Guard, Paradip have also been patrolling in the Marine Sanctuary area. ITR/ DRDO authorities have suitably instructed their concerned officers to check that fishing vessels do not enter inside the Marine Sanctuary from the neighboring States and Country.
 4. APR force are provided every year by the State Police head Quarters at the disposal of DFOs of coastal Forest Divisions (Bhadrak, Rajngar, Puri and Berhampur) to maintain law and order situation and strict vigil through round the clock sea patrolling.
 5. Berthing facilities with provision for safety and security have been built up at Barunei, Gupti, Sasanapeta and Krushnapriyapur by the Wildlife Division, Rajnagar for boats seized within Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. Paradip Port Trust authorities have allowed parking of seized

vessels in the fishing harbour at Paradeep.

6. Monthly meetings are regularly held for close rapport building amongst the officials of Forest, Fisheries and the Police Departments as also the Coast Guard.
7. VHF communication directly with Coast Guard ship has been arranged to apprehend outlaws.
8. Range Officers of coastal Forest Divisions have been declared as authorised officers under the OMFR Act to seized illegal fishing vessels entering in to the prohibited fishing zones in the Odisha coastal waters.
9. Govt. in Law department (vide No. V-LR-1/05/2630/ dated 22.2.2005 & No. 13130 dated 23.8.2005) have appointed six numbers of Special Public Prosecutors for six coastal districts (viz. Kendrapara, Puri, Ganjam, Balesore, Bhadrak and Jagatsinghpur districts) to conduct the prosecution cases relating to sea turtles.
10. Co-ordination meetings are organised with local fishing communities regularly to ensure their support in protection of Olive Ridley Turtles.
11. Steps are taken to mobilize and motivate the users (sources of residential and industrial light sources influencing sea turtles) to suitably dim the lights during the mass nesting and emergence of turtle hatchlings. ITR/DRDO base at outer Wheeler islands has been requested to suitably dim the lights during the turtle season as well as for adopting “blackout” practices during the mass nesting and emergence of turtle hatchlings.
12. A High Level Committee has been constituted by the State Government under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Odisha for reviewing the sea turtle protection activities from time to time for coordinating among various Departments of Odisha Government, Indian Coast Guard, IRT/DRDO, Port Authorities and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. The committee sits every year before nesting season and takes stock of the different activities to be executed for the forthcoming nesting season.
13. A state level meeting on protection and conservation of Olive Ridley sea turtles is being conducted every year regarding protection and conservation of Olive Ridley Sea turtles, with various stake holders comprising NGOs / CBOs of the sea turtle nesting area to obtain their feedback and seek their support in sea turtle conservation.
14. A web portal for monitoring sporadic nesting and mortality of Olive Ridley sea turtles (manage.odishawildlife.org) is in place to monitor sporadic nesting and turtle mortality on real time basis based on field reporting.
15. The Fisheries and ARD Department, Government of Odisha have issued one time notification vide Fisheries and ARD Department Notification No.12312/FARD / Dated 12.11.2014 for prohibition of fishing by motorized vessels, trawlers and mechanized fishing techniques within 20

Kms. from the following specified coast of the sea comprising the sea turtle congregation area and their buffer zones in the vicinity of the following three river mouths of the Odisha coast for the period from 1st November to 31st May (both days inclusive) every year.

- (a) Dhamara river mouth
- (b) Devi river mouth
- (c) Rushikulya river mouth
