

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1020
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.02.2025

Protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries

1020. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:

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

- (a) the number of new protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries established in the last five years;
- (b) the measures being taken to reduce deforestation and promote afforestation across the country; and
- (c) the steps taken to conserve endangered species and restore biodiversity in forest ecosystems?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) A total of 130 new protected areas which includes Wildlife Sanctuaries, National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves have been declared in the country from 2019 till July 2023 as per the wiienvi database.
- (b) Protection and sustainable management of the forests are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments and Union Territory administrations. For this purpose, various legal and regulatory measures have been introduced. These are National Forest Policy, 1988, Indian Forest Act, 1927, State Forest Acts, Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, and Biological Diversity Act, 2002, etc. Financial assistance is provided under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' and 'Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme' for protection of forests and wildlife.

The Government has implemented various schemes to promote afforestation across the country. These include National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Green India Mission (GIM) etc.

The Government has launched 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)' for the promotion and conservation of mangroves as a unique, natural eco-system having very high biological productivity and carbon sequestration potential beside as a bio shield.

There are various other activities and scheme through which government promote the afforestation activities which are Mahatma Gandhi National rural employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Sub-Mission on Agro-Forestry, National Bamboo Mission and Compensatory Afforestation Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various schemes of State Governments/ UT Administrations.

(c) The important steps taken by the Government for the conservation and protection of critically endangered species and its habitats are as follows:

- i. A network of Protected Areas (National parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves) has been created in the country for conservation and protection of the wildlife.
- ii. Eco-sensitive Zones are declared around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries which act as buffer against the activities outside these protected areas.
- iii. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- iv. Wild Life Crime Control Bureau coordinates with State/UTs and other enforcement agencies to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles.
- v. The local communities are involved in conservation measures through eco-development activities, which help the forest department in protection of wildlife.
- vi. The Ministry has launched the National wild life Action Plan (2017-31) for the conservation of wildlife through landscape level approach, including conservation of critically endangered species.
- vii. Financial assistance is provided to States/UTs for conservation of wildlife and its habitat under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' and 'Project Tiger and Elephant'.
- viii. A specific component of 'Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats' is included in the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' for focused conservation action on 22 critically endangered species viz Snow Leopard, Bustard including Floricans, Dolphin, Hangul, Nilgiri Tahr, Marine Turtles, Dugong, Andaman Edible- nest Swiftlet, Wild Buffalo, Nicobar Megapode, Sangai, Vultures, Malabar Civet, Great Indian one-horned Rhinoceros, Asiatic Lion, Swamp deer, Jerdon's Courser, Batagur Baska, Clouded Leopard, Arabian Sea Humpback whale, Red Panda and Caracal.
