

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2137
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2025

Decrease in dugong population

2137. SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY:

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

- (a)whether Government is aware that the dugong (sea cows) population in the country is on the verge of extinction, according to IUCN's latest report;
- (b)whether any population survey of dugongs has been conducted by Government;
- (c)if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d)the steps being taken by Government to protect dugong habitat from marine pollution and degrading human activities?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d)Dugong is listed under Schedule- I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and thereby accorded with the highest degree of protection. The Ministry undertakes population estimation for flagship species such as Tiger, Snow Leopard and Dolphin. Population assessments for several other wild animals are carried out by the State Governments and Union Territory Administration, which are not collated at the level of the Ministry.

The important steps taken by the Government to protect the marine wildlife including Dugong and their habitats include:

- i. Marine Protected Areas have been notified for the conservation of marine species.
- ii. Many threatened marine species have been listed Schedule I and II of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 according them protection against hunting.
- iii. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 empowers the Indian Coast Guards for entry, search, arrest and detention in case of contravention of provisions of the Act.
- iv. The Ministry has released the 'Marine Megafauna Stranding Management Guidelines' in 2021 for management of stranding and entanglement of marine mega fauna.
- v. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019, promulgated under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, has specific focus on conservation and management plans of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs), like Mangroves,

Seagrasses, Sand dunes, Corals and Coral reefs, Biologically active mudflats, Turtle nesting grounds, and Horse shoe crabs' habitats.

- vi. The Ministry provides financial assistance to States and Union Territories under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme-Development of Wildlife Habitats, for conservation of wildlife including marine species and their habitat, as per the Annual Plan of Operation submitted by the States and Union Territories.
- vii. The Ministry under CAMPA funded project “Recovery of Dugongs and their habitats in India: An integrated participatory approach” has supported conservation of Dugongs and their habitats in the States of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
