

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 539
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.12.2025

Status and conservation of Lesser Floricans

539. SMT. SANGEETA YADAV:

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

- (a) the current estimated population of the Lesser Florican in the country and the trend observed during the last five years, State-wise;
- (b) the main grassland habitats and migratory sites currently supporting viable populations of the species and the measures in place to monitor them, including survey methodology, frequency and institutional responsibility;
- (c) whether the Ministry has identified priority high-risk landscapes and prepared timebound action plans including habitat restoration, protected area notification, community engagement and dedicated funding to reverse the decline of species; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) The protection and management of wildlife is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry undertakes population estimation for flagship species such as Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Asian Elephant. Population assessments for several other wild animals, including birds like Lesser Floricans, are carried out by the States/UTs at different times which are not collated at the Ministry.

Key breeding habitats and priority landscapes for the Lesser Florican include Shokaliya-Bhinai in Ajmer, Rajasthan, Velavadar-Bhal in Bhavnagar and Saurashtra-Kutch, Gujarat.

The important steps taken for protection and conservation of Lesser Florican include:

- i. The Lesser Florican is listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according it the highest degree of legal protection from hunting. Section 9 of the Act provides that no person shall hunt any wild animal specified in Schedule I.
- ii. The Ministry provides financial assistance to State Governments and Union Territory Administrations under the Species Recovery Programme of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Development of Wildlife Habitats for focused conservation of identified species. The Lesser Florican is one of the 24 species identified under this Programme.

iii. Further, the Ministry has also launched Project Great Indian Bustard for conservation breeding and research-guided in-situ conservation of both the Great Indian Bustard and the Lesser Florican. The Project is being implemented by the Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with concerned State Forest Departments and includes restoration of grassland habitats, creation of protected enclosures in restored areas, protection and monitoring of critical conservation sites, removal of invasive alien species, fire prevention measures, installation and maintenance of predator proof fencing, satellite telemetry based monitoring, engagement and outreach with stakeholders and local communities for involvement in conservation efforts.

iv. Two dedicated Lesser Florican Breeding Centres with essential infrastructure are also operational, one each in Gujarat and Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, conservation breeding has been undertaken in collaboration with State Forest Department and technical support of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun with the aim of building a captive population of the species for future release in the wild and promoting in-situ conservation of the species.
