

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2026
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.11.2019

Gangetic Dolphin

2026. SHRI RAJIV PRATAPRUDY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has carried out an assessment of the population and habitation areas of the Gangetic Dolphin in the country and if so, details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the Gangetic Dolphins are an endangered species in India;
- (c) if so, details thereof along with the steps taken to preserve and increase the population of Gangetic Dolphins in the country;
- (d) whether the Government has carried out any assessment of the impact of infrastructure projects like National Waterways on the habitation and population of the Gangetic Dolphins; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?
- (f)

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) The assessment of population and habitation areas of Wildlife species in the Country is the domain of the State Forest Departments of the respective State Governments. Such type of data/ information are not collated in the Ministry. However, as per the information received from the State Governments of Assam and Uttar Pradesh, the details of population of Gangetic Dolphins in the respective States is as follows:

Assam: The population assessment in the State was conducted during January, 2018 to March, 2018. The details are as Following are the details:

Sl. No.	River	Population of Gangetic Dolphin (in No.)	Assessment of Habitat Areas (In Kms)
i.	Subansiri River	48	93
ii.	Brahmaputra River	877	884
iii.	Kulsi River	37	69
	Total	962	1046

Uttar Pradesh: In the State of Uttar Pradesh, the Gangetic River Dolphin census had been conducted jointly by Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, WWF-India and other organizations in the year 2012 and year 2015. Following are the details:

Sl. No.	Year	Population of Gangetic Dolphin (in No.)
i.	2012	671
ii.	2015	1272

(b) and (c) The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Gangetic Dolphin as 'Endangered' species in India. The steps taken to preserve and increase the population of Gangetic Dolphins in the Country are as follows:

- i. Gangetic Dolphins is listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according it the highest degree of protection against hunting.
- ii. Gangetic Dolphin is one of the 21 species identified for taking up 'Recovery programme of Critically Endangered Species, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitat'.
- iii. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated Gangetic Dolphins as 'National Aquatic Animal.
- iv. Wildlife Sanctuaries covering important Dolphin habitats have been created in the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve their habitats. These include National Chambal Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh), Saranath Turtle Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh), Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary (Bihar).
- v. A project on Recovery of River Dolphins has been initiated by the Ministry with Financial support from National Authority CAMPA and Technical support of Wildlife Institute of India and State Forest Departments of Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam, West Bengal. The other collaborators in this project include Non Governmental Organizations like ARANYAK, WWF, Patna University, Bhagalpur University etc.
- vi. Awareness generations programs/ campaigns are being carried out time to time by the State Forest Departments to sensitize local fishermen, people including school children.
- vii. An Interpretation Centre has been established by Uttar Pradesh

Forest Department in collaboration with WII, Dehradun in Sarnath Varanasi.

- viii. Uttar Pradesh Forest Department had conducted the Canal Mapping near Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in the year 2018 to understand the straying and behavior of stranded Dolphins.
- ix. State Government of Assam has notified the River Dolphin as “State Aquatic Animal” and has regulated the fishing activities seasonally to supplement the food for Dolphins. The silt/sand lifting from rivers have been also stopped in the Dolphin’s habitat areas to conserve and maintain the habitat suitability.

(d) and (e) The Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin (2010-2020) has identified threats to Gangetic Dolphins and impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-base on Dolphins populations.
