

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2065**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2021

**Conservation of Vultures**

2065. SHRI DHANUSH M. KUMAR:  
SHRI C.N. ANNADURAI:  
SHRI SELVAM G.:  
SHRI GAUTHAM SIGAMANI PON:  
SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:  
SHRI VIJAY KUMAR DUBEY:  
SHRI B.Y. RAGHAVENDRA:

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

- (a) whether the National Board for Wildlife has approved an action plan for vulture conservation recently and if so, the details of the said action plan;
- (b) whether the Government had been successful in implementing conservation plan of vultures which was formulated in the year 2006 and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to establish new vulture conservation centres in the country including Tamil Nadu and if so, the time by which it is likely to be set up, State/UT-wise;
- (d) whether nine species of vultures present in India are facing the danger of extinction and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the other steps taken by the Government for conservation of vultures?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

- (a) The Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife in its 59<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 has recommended the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India, 2020-2025. Some of the important objectives of the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation are as follows:
  - i. Prevention of poisoning of cattle carcasses, the principal food of vultures, with veterinary Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID) and carrying out safety-testing of new veterinary NSAIDs on vultures, prior to commercial release.

- ii. Removal of drugs from veterinary use if they are found to be toxic to vultures with the help of Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).
  - iii. Establishing additional Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres (VCBC) in the country.
  - iv. Enhancement of conservation breeding programme of Red Headed Vulture and Egyptian Vulture and establishing at least one Vulture Safe Zone in each State for the conservation of the remnant populations in that State.
  - v. Establishing 4 rescue centres in different geographical areas, viz., Pinjore in North India, Bhopal in Central India, Guwahati in North-east India and Hyderabad in South India. There are currently no dedicated rescue centres for treatment of vultures. One centre would also be established in Karnataka.
- (b) The Government of India has taken various steps for the Vulture Conservation in the country based on the recommendations of the Vulture Action Plan released in 2006. Some of the important steps includes:
- i. Veterinary use of the drug diclofenac was banned in the year 2006.
  - ii. In the year 2015, the Government of India directed that only single dose vials of diclofenac could be used for human consumption.
  - iii. For Ex-situ conservation of vultures, eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres have been established in different States of the country. Four of the centres, viz., Pinjore in Haryana, Rajabhatkhawa in West Bengal, Rani in Assam and Kerwa near Bhopal are managed by respective State Forest Departments with support from Bombay Natural History Society and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Four more centres viz. Junagarh in Gujarat, Nandankanan in Odisha, Hyderabad in Telangana and Muta in Ranchi are established in the State Zoos and are being run by State Forest Departments with support from Central Zoo Authority (CZA) of MoEF&CC and technical support from Bombay Natural History Society.
  - iv. Vulture reintroduction programme has been launched from Pinjore, Haryana and Rajabhatkhawa, West Bengal centres for augmenting the populations for vultures.
  - v. Eight sites have been identified for the establishment of Vulture Safe Zones in different parts of the Country for conservation of the remnant populations of Vultures.
- (c) The Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India, 2020-2025 has identified setting up Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres in the States of Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as one of the priority actions for vulture conservation. The Ministry has requested the State Governments to take action as per the Action Plan.

- (d) As per information available in the Ministry, the population of three species of Vultures, viz., *Gyps indicus*, *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps tenuirostris*, had drastically declined during the 1990s. However, due to the concerted efforts by the Government, the population of these vulture species has stabilized now. The population estimation of other species of Vultures is not collated in the Ministry.
- (e) The important steps taken by the Government to save the vultures and increase their number are as follows:
- i. All the species of Vultures have been listed in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
  - ii. The Government of India has recently launched an Action Plan for Vulture Conservation (2020-2025) on 9th November, 2020.
  - iii. The vial size of the drug diclonofec has been restricted to 3ml to prevent its use in livestock.
  - iv. Safety testing of various veterinary non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs, available in the market to identify their toxicity to vultures.
  - v. Establishing vulture safe zones in different parts of the country for conservation of the remnant population of vultures.
  - vi. Raising awareness especially among users of veterinary formulations.
  - vii. Ministry sponsored films 'The Last Flight' and 'Vanishing Vultures' are frequently telecasted on radio and television in order to raise awareness on vulture conservation. States have been requested to develop education and awareness materials, keeping the Animal Husbandry sectors and farmers in mind.
  - viii. Eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres have been established in India.
  - ix. The Indian Veterinary Research Institute led a research study funded by the Ministry to identify a safe alternative to diclofenac by carrying out safety-testing of the shortlisted drug meloxicam on vultures, in collaboration with BNHS and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, an international bird conservation organization based in the United Kingdom. Meloxicam was proved to be safe for vultures and was promoted as an alternative to diclofenac.
  - x. Government of India provides funding support to the States under Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitats for conservation of Vultures under the Species Recovery Programme.

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