

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 890**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2021

**Protection of Wildlife Species**

890. DR. SHASHI THAROOR:

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

- (a) whether COVID-19 pandemic-induced restrictions have had economic and ecological impact on centres of wildlife preservation and if so, details thereof, sanctuary-wise and national park-wise;
- (b) whether directions have been given for welfare of animals that have remained tied up with limited food and water during the pandemic, if so, details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether incidents of poaching have doubled during the lockdown period in the country and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether wildlife trafficking is one of the major factors responsible for extinction of several endangered species in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) if not, the alternate factors responsible for the extinction of endangered species; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to protect wildlife species against illegal wildlife trade, State/UT-wise?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the National Parks and Sanctuaries were closed for tourism from time to time in pursuance of directions of Ministry of Home Affairs to contain the spread of the virus infection. Sanctuary-wise and National Park-wise assessment on economic and ecological impact has not been carried out by the Ministry.
- (b) The Ministry had issued directions to the States/UTs for managing National Parks and Sanctuaries while following due COVID protocols. Further, the Central Zoo Authority has issued directives to the States/UTs requesting for specifying food and drinking water supply upkeep and healthcare of captive animals housed in zoos, under the essential services and exempt them from the restrictions under extant legal provisions.

- (c) As per the data of three years with respect to wildlife cases analyzed by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, there is no indication of doubling of poaching incidents during lockdown.
- (d) and (e) Wildlife trafficking is only one of the factors responsible for loss of certain wildlife species. Habitat loss, climate change, natural reasons like infighting, diseases, etc. are other factors resulting in loss of wildlife species.
- (f) The important steps taken by the Government to protect wildlife species against illegal wildlife trade include:
- (i) Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals, birds and their habitats.
  - (ii) Financial assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', which inter-alia, includes Development of Wildlife Habitats, Project Tiger and Project Elephant, for providing better protection to wildlife including birds and improvement of habitat.
  - (iii) A specific component of 'Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats' is provided in the on-going Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' for focused conservation action on 22 identified critically endangered species including Humpback whale, Snow leopard, Hangul, Sangai deer, Marine turtle, Bustards, Red Panda, Nicobar megapode, Jerdon's Courser, Caracal and vultures. Financial assistance is provided to States/UT Governments for recovery programme of the critically endangered species of birds and animals.
  - (iv) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for punishment for violation of its provisions. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).
  - (v) Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has been created for control of wildlife crimes.

(vi) The law enforcement agencies like Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, etc have been trained by the WCCB who assist in control of wildlife crime.

(vii) India is a Party to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) and coordinates with international agencies in control of wildlife crime.

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