

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1373
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021

Environment related Offences

1373. SHRI SHANMUGA SUNDARAM K.:

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

- (a) the Crime in India report released by the National Crime Records Bureau for 2020 indicates that the number of cases registered for environment-related offences has increased compared to the previous year;
- (b) if so, the number of cases registered for the past three years and the current year;
- (c) the number of offences out of the above registered under the Noise Pollution Act and Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act; and
- (d) the steps taken to prevent violation under the Forest Act?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b)

The Crime in India report released for 2020 indicates that the number of cases registered for environment-related offences has increased from 34676 in 2019 to 61767 in 2020.

Details of total no. environmental offenses registered from 2017 to 2020 are given below:

Crime head	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total cases registered for investigation	44808	41441	40968	68921

(c)

Out of the total, the number of offences registered under the Noise Pollution Act and Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act are given below:

S.N.	Crime head	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	Noise Pollution Acts	8574	8075	8689	7482
2	The Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act	30784	28282	27407	55251

(d)

The Forest authorities States/UTs are mandated to take action under the Forest Act, 1927. However, as mandated, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has taken following steps to

prevent illegal trafficking of endangered animals/wildlife species and to conserve wild flora and fauna of the country:-

- (i) Conducting joint operations with State enforcement agencies to apprehend criminals involved in smuggling. 153 joint operations have been conducted in 2019-20 which led to the arrest of 344 wildlife criminals while in 2020-21, 101 joint operations resulted in the arrest of 304 criminals and in 2021-22 till Sept. 2021, 74 Joint operations have been conducted in which 202 wildlife criminals have been arrested.
- (ii) Conducting capacity building for Forests & Police Officials on investigation of Wildlife cases under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. 26 such programs were conducted and 1081 officials from State Police and Forest department were trained in 2018-19, 24 programs conducted and 1102 officials trained in 2019-20, while 11 programs had been conducted and 403 officials trained in 2020-21. In 2021-22 till September, 2021, 03 such Capacity Building have been conducted resulting in the training of 141 officials.
- (iii) Conducting sensitization programs for the officials of Border Guarding Forces, Customs, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Judicial officers, RPF, GRP and other stake holders. 69 such programs were conducted and 4939 officials were sensitized in 2018-19, 97 programs conducted and 7692 officials sensitized in 2019-20 while 108 programs have been conducted and 8603 officials sensitized in 2020-21. During 2021-22 till September, 76 online webinars have been conducted through which 4480 stakeholders have been sensitized.
- (iv) Conducting sensitization of representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and awareness programs for students and members of public on the importance of wildlife and their role to combat wildlife crime. 31 such programs were conducted and 2323 representatives of PRIs/Students/Public members were sensitized in 2018-19, 33 programs conducted and 1906 representatives were sensitized in 2019-20, while 03 programs conducted and 315 representatives sensitized in 2020-21. In 2021-22 till Sept., 05 programs have been conducted and 272 representatives of PRIs/villagers located around the Protected Areas have been sensitized.
- (v) Issuing alerts and advisories on poaching and illegal trade of wildlife to the concerned State and Central agencies for preventive action. WCCB issued 124 alerts and advisories in 2018-19 and 103 have been issued in 2019-20, in 2020-21, 06 advisories and 234 alerts issued. In 2021-22, 03 advisories and 70 actionable alerts have been issued to State Agencies.
- (vi) Organized Inter-Agency meetings for coordination of inter-agency enforcement efforts in combating illegal wildlife crime. 09 IAC meetings were organized in 2018-19, 07 in 2019-20, 04 in 2020-21 and 03 have been conducted in 2021-22.
- (vii) Participation in the Investigation Support Meetings (ISM) of the concerned enforcement agencies of India and neighbouring countries for working on the cross border linkages involved through the support of INTERPOL.

Apart from this the Bureau is regularly envisaging, planning, coordinating and conducting a number of specie specific enforcement operations with coordination of State Enforcement Agencies to invite attention of all the enforcement agencies throughout the country towards Killing, poaching and illegal Notable amongst these are-

“Operation **SAVE KURMA**” to focus on the poaching, transportation and illegal trade of live turtles and tortoises (15th Dec 2016 to 30th Jan 2017). The operation resulted in seizure of more than 15912 Nos. of live turtles with arrest of 55 suspects.

“**Operation TURTSIELD**” (1st Dec. 2019 to 31st January 2020) and “**Operation TURTSIELD-II**” (1st Dec. 2020 to 28th February 2021) – To tackle illegal trade of live turtles from resulting in the seizure of 4601 live/dead turtles and arrest of 45 wildlife accused in 1st operation while 59 accused were arrested in 2nd operation which led to the recovery of 11771 live Turtles/Tortoises & 45 Kgs Turtle Calipee.

“Operation **WILDNET**” (1st May 2017 to 30th June 2017), “Operation **WILDNET-II**” (1st November to 30th November, 2019), “Operation **WILDNET-III**” (1st July to 30th September, 2020) and “Operation **WILDNET-IV**” (1st August to 30th September, 2021) to drag the attention of the enforcement agencies within the country to focus their attention on the ever increasing illegal wildlife trade over internet using Social Media Platforms. The operation resulted in detection of online offers for sale of illegal wildlife articles, arrest of number of online sellers and seizures of articles.

“**Operation LESKNOW**” (1st Aug 2017 to 31st Aug 2017), **LESKNOW-II** (1st September 2018 to 30th September 2018) and **Op LESKNOW-III** (1st September, 2019 to 30th September 2019) to drag attention of the enforcement agencies within the country towards the illegal wildlife trade in lesser known species of wildlife During these three operations 130 criminals were arrested while 74 cases of trade of lesser known species were detected.

“**Operation BIRBIL**” to curb illegal trade in wild cat and wild bird species (1st Nov 2017 to 30th Nov 2017). A total of 23 cases were detected during the operation out of which 9 cases involved seizure of bird species in which different species such as 35 Little Egrets, 35 Common Teals, 14 Rose Ringed Parakeets, 15 Munias and other 11 bird species were seized.

“**Operation SOFTGOLD**” from 1st October, 2018 to 31st March, 2019 to tackle Shahtoosh Shawl (made from Chiru wool) illegal trade and to spread awareness among the weavers and traders engaged in this trade. During operation, 350 Shawls were detected.

“**Operation Clean Art**”- A pan India operation in October, 2019 to drag the attention of Enforcement Agencies towards illegal wildlife trade in Mongoose hair brushes resulting in the arrest of 43 wildlife offenders and seizure of 54352 Mongoose hair brushes and 113 Kgs of raw Mongoose hair.

“**Operation FREEFLY**” (1st Feb. 2021 to 31st March 2021)– To check illegal trade of live birds in pet markets from resulting in the seizure of 737 scheduled wild birds and arrest of 12 wildlife accused.

“**Operation WETMARK**” (10th June 2021 to 10th July 2021)– To ensure prohibition of sale of meat of wild animals in wet markets across the country through enforcement as well as sensitization and awareness programs.

WCCB also actively participated in global operations such as **Operation Thunderbird** envisaged by INTERPOL’s Wildlife Working Group by ensuring coordination and participation of various enforcement agencies in India which resulted in seizure of large number of wildlife/ wildlife articles through registration of 38 cases and arrest of 71 criminals. WCCB also participated in INTERPOL coordinated “**Operation**

THUNDERSTORM” in May 2018, resulting in arrest of 98 wildlife criminals with the seizure of different wildlife contrabands with registration of 52 cases across the country. In June 2019, WCCB participated in “**Operation THUNDERBALL**” resulted in the seizure of wildlife contraband detected in 44 cases and 87 wildlife criminals had been arrested during operation. INTERPOL launched global wildlife enforcement operation of THUNDER series code named “**Operation THUNDER 2021**” from 1st October 2021 to 31st October, 2021 which was coordinated by WCCB. The operation resulted in registration of 27 wildlife cases across the country and arrest of 59 wildlife offenders.

- (viii) The Bureau has developed an online Wildlife Crime Database Management System and shared user credentials with 970 Divisional Forest Offices, 50 Field Directors of Tiger Reserves and 37 Chief Wildlife Wardens in the Forest Department and 34 Directors General of Police to facilitate them to upload data pertaining to wildlife crime detected on day to day basis.

The Bureau has brought out INTERPOL’s Purple Notice on Pangolin, Live Turtles, Red Sanders, Rhino, SausureaCostus Roots, illegal poaching & smuggling of marine products like Sea Cucumber, Sea Horse & Pipe fish, illegal trade of exotic birds to disseminate the modus operandi encountered by enforcement agencies in the country to the other countries.

The Additional Director, WCCB has been designated as the nodal point on wildlife crime on SAWEN. Information sharing with the member countries of SAWEN is done during meetings conducted by SAWEN Secretariat to strengthen cooperation among the member counties with a view to combat wildlife crime in the country.

Regular meetings are attended and information shared with the counterparts of Myanmar as per the MoU between India and Myanmar on Border Cooperation in which wildlife crime control is one the agenda.

The Bureau has brought out the following publications for the capacity building of the field officers of relevant enforcement agencies:

- a) Wildlife Crime Investigation manual in Hindi and English
- b) Pocket booklet for wildlife crime investigation officers on wildlife crime investigation.
- c) X-Ray Manual of wildlife products in illegal trade.
- d) Identification Manual of Wildlife Species in trade.
- e) Hindi and English Booklet of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for investigators and prosecutors.
- f) A book on “Illegal Bird Trade in India” has also been prepared by WCCB for Enforcement Agencies.

The efforts of WCCB to combat wildlife crime has been recognized internationally through following awards and appreciations:

- i) Asia Environment Enforcement Award 2018.
- ii) Appreciation of INTERPOL for Operation THUNDERSTORM in 2018.
- iii) Appreciation of CITES Secretariat for Operation WILDNET-II IN 2019.
- iv) Clark R Bavin Award for Wildlife Law Enforcement, 2019.
- v) Asia Environment Enforcement Award 2020.
