

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4111
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.03.2022

Survey and Assessment of Wetlands

4111. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

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

- (a) whether the Government has been conducting regular surveys and assessment of areas classified as wetlands in the country;
- (b) if so, the total area declared as wetlands in the country since 1981;
- (c) the details of area newly added as wetlands in the country at the beginning of every five years starting from 1981;
- (d) the total area classified as Ramsar sites in the country since 1981;
- (e) whether there has been considerable reduction in area of existing wetlands due to urbanisation and encroachments over the past few decades;
- (f) whether the Government has noticed any change/reduction in migratory bird species due to this, if so, the actions taken thereto; and
- (g) the details and achievements of the National Wetlands Conservation Programme and National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems for rejuvenation of wetlands?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. As per the 'Space based Observation of Indian Wetlands', 2021 by Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad, a total of 2,31,195 wetlands (> 2.25 ha) have been mapped at 1:50,000 scale during 2017-18. The total wetland area estimated is 15.98 million hectares, which is around 4.86 percent of the total geographic area of the country and 0.64 Mha more compared to earlier estimates of 2006-07.

(d) India became a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on 01.02.1982 and so far, 49 wetlands in the country have been designated as Ramsar sites with a total area of 10,93,636 hectares.

(e) & (f) While the Central and State Governments take all possible steps for the preservation, conservation and restoration of wetlands, developmental activities and anthropogenic pressures do affect wetlands. Although, no specific data is available w.r.t change/reduction in migratory bird species due to adverse impact on wetlands, changes in migratory pattern of birds cannot be ruled out due to both natural and human induced factors. As a signatory to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) of Wild Animals, India has been making efforts to mitigate the changes in the habitat that impact birds.

(g) The salient details and achievements of National Programme for Conservation of Wetlands are as follows:

- **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA)** scheme for conservation and management of wetlands in the country on cost sharing basis between Central Government and respective State Governments i.e. 100% Central Share for Union Territories (UTs), 90% (Centre) & 10% (North East & Himalayan States) and 60% (Centre) & 40% (remaining States). The scheme covers various activities such as interception, diversion and treatment of wastewater, shoreline protection, lake front development, in-situ cleaning i.e. desilting & dewatering, storm water management, bioremediation, catchment area treatment, Lake Beautification, survey & demarcation, bio-fencing, fisheries development, weed control, biodiversity conservation, education and awareness creation, community participation, etc.
- As a signatory to the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** since 01.02.1982, India has designated 49 Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). India stands first in South Asia and third in Asia w.r.t the number of Ramsar Sites.
- **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017** - Vide these Rules, inter-alia, the State/UT Wetlands Authorities have been constituted. The National Wetlands Committee inter-alia is responsible for advising on appropriate policies and action programmes for conservation and wise use of wetlands. Guidelines have been issued to support the State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations in the implementation of the Rules.
- Four pronged **Wetlands Rejuvenation Programme** by a) Developing baseline information; b) Rapid assessment of wetlands condition (Wetland Health Cards); c) Constitution of 'Wetlands Mitras' - stakeholder platforms to enable collaborative and participatory management; and d) Management planning, addressing the specific wetlands biodiversity and ecosystem services values and threats. Till date, more than 500 wetland health cards have been prepared and more than 10,000 people took the pledge of wetland mitra.
- **Capacity Building and Outreach programme** – National and Regional workshops for Wetlands Managers & Stakeholders are organised on conservation and management of wetlands, preparation of Brief Documents etc. World Wetlands Day is celebrated at National level on 2nd February of each year in collaboration with the concerned State Governments to raise awareness among all sections of the society about values and functions of wetlands and utilization of their resources.
- An online portal (<https://indianwetlands.in/>) for Wetlands of India has been developed to facilitate knowledge sharing, host capacity development material, and provide a single-point access data repository.
