

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3625
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2022

Marsh Lands

3625. SHRI K. NAVASKANI:

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

- (a) whether there is any statistical data on the marsh lands in the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of strategies and plans to preserve those marsh lands; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) According to the definition of wetland under Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, an area of marsh, fen, peat land or water; whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters, are considered as wetlands.

As per the National Wetland Inventory & Assessment, 2011, Space Applications Centre- ISRO Ahmedabad identified approximately 2.0 lakhs water bodies/wetlands (>2.25 hectares) across the country covering an area of approximately 10 million ha which includes lakes/ponds, ox-bow lakes, high altitude & riverine wetlands, waterlogged areas, tanks, reservoirs, lagoons, creeks, sand beaches, corals, mangroves, mud flats, salt pans, aquaculture ponds, salt marshes, etc.

- (b) & (c) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as regulatory framework for conservation and management of wetlands across country to conserve, manage and maintain the ecological character of the wetlands without restricting its wise use.

Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is currently implementing a centrally sponsored scheme namely, National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA) for conservation and management of identified wetlands (includes lakes) in the country on cost sharing basis between Central Government and respective State Governments. The scheme covers various activities such as interception, diversion and treatment of wastewater, shoreline

protection, lake front development, in-situ cleaning i.e., desilting & de-weeding, 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.

Four – pronged approach of preparing Brief Documents, filling Ecosystem Health Cards, instituting Wetland Mitras and formulating Integrated Management Plans based on the health and specific threats facing the wetlands, is in place for conservation and management of wetlands. Under the NPCA scheme, the central assistance is based on the proposals received from the State Governments in the form of Integrated Management Plans including brief documents, in conformity with the guidelines and budget availability. So far, MoEF&CC has sanctioned proposals for conservation of 164 wetlands across the country and released an amount of about Rs. 1066.43 Crores as central share.

As a result of above said measures, 64 wetlands/water bodies have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance, Ramsar sites, across the country under Ramsar Convention since 1981, covering total area of around 1.25 million Ha. Out of 64 Ramsar sites, 38 were designated in the last 7 years, i.e., from 2014 to till date.

A dedicated Web Portal ([https:// indianwetlands.in](https://indianwetlands.in)) for Wetlands has been developed, which is a publicly available information and knowledge platform in order to facilitate knowledge sharing, information dissemination, host capacity building material, and provide a single-point access data repository for processing information and making it available to the stakeholders in an efficient and accessible manner.

A Centre for Wetlands Conservation and Management (CWCM) under the Ministry's National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) has been established to serve as a knowledge hub and to enable exchange of knowledge between wetland users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners and to assist the national and State/ UT Governments in the design and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks, management planning, monitoring and targeted research specifically related to wetlands.
