

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2562
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2025

Nesting by Ridley Sea Turtles

2562. SHRI CHAVAN RAVINDRA VASANTRAO:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE:

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

- (a) whether 6.41 lakh olive ridley sea turtles have laid all time high eggs at the Odisha's Rushikulya beach at Ganjam district during their mass nesting season which last till first week of March and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of arrangements made by the Government to facilitate smooth nesting by ridley sea turtles for the present season;
- (c) whether Indian Coast Guard has started operation 'Olivia' a comprehensive initiative aimed at safeguarding the turtles during their nesting period at beaches, if so, the details thereof; and;
- (d) the details of other measures taken/being taken by the Government to prevent any alien intruders into the river beds and beaches where turtles have laid their eggs?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) and (b) Management and protection of wildlife including marine turtles is carried out by the concerned State/Union Territory Governments. As informed by the Government of Odisha, 6,98,718 numbers of nesting of Olive Ridley Turtles occurred during the period from 15.02.2025 to 23.02.2025. Further, during the first week of March 2025, sporadic nesting of 462 numbers has also been reported in Rushikulya rookery. The important actions taken by the State Government of Odisha during nesting of Olive Ridley Turtles include beach cleaning, beach fencing, creation of artificial hatcheries, management of lighting in the area near beach to prevent turtles from disorientation, supporting local communities through livelihood opportunities, patrolling of the sea in coordination with marine police, Coast Guard and Fisheries Department, etc.
- (c) and (d) As per the information received from the Government of Odisha, the Indian Coast Guard undertakes Olive Ridely Turtle protection program 'Operation Olivia' along the Coast of Odisha every year. The overall aim of the programme is to protect and safeguard Olive Ridley Turtles arriving along the Odisha coast for mass nesting. Coordination with various agencies like Fisheries Department, Armed Police Reserve, Ports Authorities, Forest Department, etc, including awareness programmes are undertaken under the programme.

The important steps taken for protection of marine turtles in the country include:

- i. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 empowers the Indian Coast Guards for search, seizure, arrest and detention, in cases of violation of provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ii. A National Marine Turtle Action Plan (2021-2026) has been released by the Ministry with the aim to conserve marine turtles and their habitats for maintaining a healthy marine ecosystem. The Action Plan is implemented through a coordinated and participatory mechanism to ensure long term survival of marine turtles.
- iii. Financial assistance is provided to States/UTs for conservation of wildlife and its habitat under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ‘Development of Wildlife Habitats’ which also includes for undertaking ecotourism related activities.
- iv. Awareness related activities like beach monitoring, educational activities, turtle festivals etc are organized in various coastal States with active engagement with local fishing communities.
- v. A network of Protected Areas (National parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves) has been created in the country for conservation and protection of the wildlife.
- vi. Five species of marine turtles occurring in the Indian waters have been included in the Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby providing them the highest degree of protection from hunting.
- vii. A specific component of ‘Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats’ is included in the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ‘Development of Wildlife Habitats’ for focused conservation action on 22 critically endangered species, which also includes marine turtles.
- viii. Notification of several beaches as conservation priority areas for regular monitoring and management following the guidelines of the State Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) I.
- ix. Wild Life Crime Control Bureau coordinates with State/UTs and other enforcement agencies to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles
