

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 66
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.07.2025

Conservation of the Ganges River Dolphin

66. SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI:

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

- (a) the details regarding the current estimated population of the Ganges River Dolphins in the Brahmaputra and Barak river basins and its estimated decrease/increase during the last ten years;
- (b) the details regarding the number of dead Ganges River Dolphins that have been found in the Brahmaputra and Barak river basins during the last five years along with the common causes of death that have been ascertained for them;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any comprehensive studies on the impact of construction of dams and other infrastructure such as bridges at the locations having more population of Ganges River Dolphins in the North-East Region and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details regarding the funds allocated to the North-Eastern Region (NER) under Project Dolphin and the utilisation rates of the same, State-wise?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) Under Project Dolphin, the first-ever comprehensive population survey of River Dolphins was conducted in the entire range of the Ganges River Dolphin in the Ganga and Brahmaputra as well as the Indus River Dolphin in the Beas river systems. The survey estimated a population of 6,324 (range: 5,977-6,688) Ganges River Dolphins. As per studies conducted on River Dolphins the population of Gangetic River Dolphin in Brahmaputra River has been reported as stable but there are no recent reports of its presence in Barak River. The details of current estimated populations of the Gangetic River Dolphin in Brahmaputra and Barak River basins is as given below

	River Stretch	Population Estimation
Brahmaputra	Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Setu-Hatsingimari (Indo-Bangladesh Border)	584 (558-610)
Barak	Sonabari (Assam-Manipur Border)-Rajartila (Indo-Bangladesh Border)	0

- (b) As reported by the state of Assam, a total of 10 cases of mortality of River Dolphins was found across various river systems in Assam between 2020 and 2025. Various

reasons like accidental killing, unknown causes, internal injury etc were ascribed to these deaths.

- (c) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not undertaken any specific study on impact of construction of dams and other infrastructure at locations having more populations of Ganges River Dolphins in North East Region. However, the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 mandates a comprehensive environmental clearance process which also includes biodiversity assessments as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process for dam construction projects. Further, for projects involving more than 50 ha and falling within Protected Areas, biodiversity impact assessment report is required for consideration of the project by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.
- (d) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides financial assistance to State Governments and Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Development of Wildlife Habitats” for conservation and management of protected areas, conservation of wildlife outside protected areas and recovery programme of 22 identified critically endangered species and its habitats as per the Annual Plan of Operations (APO) received from the State Governments and Union Territories and subject to availability of funds. The details of funds released for species recovery programme of Dolphin to States/UTs under the scheme during last five years is attached at **Annexure**.

Annexure

**Annexure referred to in reply to parts (d) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 66
due for reply on 21.07.2025 regarding “Conservation of the Ganges River Dolphin”**

Details of funds released during the last five years to States/UTs for conservation of Dolphin under
component of Centrally Sponsored Scheme - ‘Development of Wildlife Habitats’

(in Lakhs)

S.No.	Name of State	Year wise fund released				
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1	Bihar	21.685	112.14223	0	44.10511	0
2	Odisha	22.80	22.95	47.70	40.17966	53.48794
3	Lakshadweep	69.05	46.12	40.175	46.285	46.285
4	Andaman & Nicobar	0	0	25.125	0	0
5	West Bengal	0	0	20.14875	0	28.76
6	Uttar Pradesh	0	0	55.0068	0	62.11254
7	Assam	0	0	24.39	0	0
8	Madhya Pradesh	0	0	18.9426	24.367	52.20
9	Rajasthan	0	0	10.25	0	0
10	Tamil Nadu	0	0	0	121.902	120.40125
	Total	113.535	181.21223	241.73815	276.83877	363.24673
