

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1425
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2026

Wildlife and Animal Conservation Initiatives

1425. SHRI VISHWESHWAR HEGDE KAGERI:

SHRI P P CHAUDHARY:

SHRI KESINENI SIVANATH:

DR. RAJESH MISHRA:

SHRI BHOJRAJ NAG:

SMT. SANJNA JATAV:

SHRI NABA CHARAN MAJHI:

SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI:

SHRI AVIMANYU SETHI:

SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:

SHRI BHARATSINHJI SHANKARJI DABHI:

DR. BHOLA SINGH:

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

- (a) the details of the key animal and wildlife conservation initiatives implemented during in the last three years to protect flagship and endangered species, including measures under Project Tiger, Project Elephant, conservation of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles and allied species-specific programmes in the States including Odisha and Rajasthan particularly in Pali Lok Sabha Constituency ;
- (b) the steps taken to strengthen habitat management, wildlife corridors, and human–wildlife conflict mitigation across identified priority landscapes including the said States;
- (c) the role plays by technology, scientific monitoring use of GIS/camera traps and initiatives;
- (d) whether the Government has assessed recent trends in wildlife populations and conservation effectiveness across the States and if so, the details thereof species and landscape-wise including Odisha, Rajasthan and Bulandshahr;
- (e) the date on which the Son Gharial Sanctuary was setup in Sidhi district along with the details with regard to number of gharials at the time of setting up of said sanctuary and at present; and
- (f) whether there is any proposal to wind up the gharial project by relocating the remaining gharials elsewhere in case the number of gharials have decreased?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for conservation, protection and management of wildlife. The Act regulates hunting of wild animals, provides for declaration of Sanctuaries, National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves and also for penalties for violation of the provisions of the Act.

The Ministry provides the financial assistance to States and Union Territories including the State of Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' and 'Project Tiger and Elephant' which aims at conservation and protection of wildlife and improvement of its habitats. The financial assistance is provided as per the Annual Plan of Operations received from the respective States and Union Territories.

These schemes support activities like removal of invasive species, creation of water holes, grassland management, maintenance of fire lines, soil & moisture conservation works, establishment and maintenance of anti-poaching camps, patrolling squads, improved wireless communication, wildlife veterinary care, use of technology like camera traps, drones, e-surveillance etc. for monitoring of wild animals, detecting illegal intrusions, early warning system in relaying information to quick reaction teams in the field for managing human wildlife conflict, eco-development activities involving communities.

Conservation of flagship species such as Tiger, Elephant, Dolphin etc are implemented in project mode like Project Tiger, Project Elephant, Project Lion, Project Snow Leopard, Project Dolphin. Under a species specific component 'Recovery programme for saving critically endangered species and habitats', States and Union Territories are assisted for focused conservation action on identified 24 critically endangered species. Conservation of Marine Turtles are also supported under this component.

The population assessment of wild animals is carried out by the respective States and Union Territories from time to time. The population assessment of the identified flagship species are carried out at National level. The first ever scientific assessment of the snow leopards and river dolphin have indicated a population of 718 snow leopards and 6327 river dolphins in the country. The tiger population has shown increase as per the All India Tiger Estimation done in 2022, with an estimated number of 3682 (range 3167-3925) as compared to the 2018 estimation of 2967 (range 2603-3346). Further, as per 'Status of Leopards in India- 2022' report, leopard population in country is estimated at 13,874 (Range: 12,616 – 15,132) individuals, in comparison to 12852 (12,172-13,535) individuals as per 2018 report.

Further, with a view to protecting, propagating and developing wildlife a network of Protected Areas have been created in the country. The number of Protected Areas have increased from 981 in 2020 to 1134 in 2025. Similarly, the Tiger Reserves have increased from 50 to 58 and Elephant Reserves have increased from 30 to 33 during the same period. In addition, for maintaining the ecological connectivity, 32 tiger corridors and 150 Elephant corridors have been identified. The Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) exercise for the National Parks, Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves and Elephant Reserves, have also been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of management.

(e) and (f) As per the information available in the Ministry, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh had notified Son Gharial Sanctuary vide notification dated 23rd September 1981. During the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wild Life held on 03.03.2025, a new initiative for conservation of Gharials and tackle threats to their survival was decided upon. Subsequently, Gharial has also been included under the species recovery programme component of Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitats.
