

Census of rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park

*60. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA :

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

- (a) when was the last rhinoceros census done in the Kaziranga National Park;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the number of rhinoceros has gone down significantly;
- (c) if so, what are the major causes of their death; and
- (d) the details of the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) As per the information received from the State Government of Assam, the last census of rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park was done during 2009.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. There are no such reports. On the contrary, the number of rhinoceros has increased from 1855 in 2006 to 2048 in 2009. However, major causes of death of rhinoceroses include old age, disease, man-animal conflict, accident, poaching drowning, tiger kill, etc.

(d) Important steps taken by the Central Government for conservation of wildlife including rhinoceros in the country are as follows :

1. Threatened species of wildlife, including Rhinos are placed in the Schedules of the Wildlife (Protection), Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection.
2. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended from time to time and made more stringent against wildlife related offences.
3. A network of Protected Areas has been established to conserve wildlife and their habitats including rhinoceros.
4. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to check illegal trade in wildlife and its products.
5. The State/UT Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around wildlife rich areas.
6. Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State/UT Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz, Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, Project Tiger and Project Elephant including for providing better protection and conservation of wildlife rhinoceros.
7. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, a new component has been added for initiating Recovery Programme for critically endangered species including rhinoceros and their habitats" during the 11th Five Year plan period.

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