

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2117
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.03.2021

Action plan for conservation of vultures

2117 SHRI RAJEEV SATAV:
SHRI SANJAY SETH:

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

- (a) Whether the National Board for Wildlife has recently approved an action plan for vulture conservation and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) Whether Government proposes to establish new vulture conservation centres in the States of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and if so, the time by which it will be setup;
- (c) Whether nine species of vultures present in India are facing the danger of extinction; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken by Government for conservation of vultures?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) The Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife in its 59th meeting held on 5th October, 2020 has recommended the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India, 2020-2025.
- (b) The Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India, 2020-2025 has identified setting up Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres in the states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu as one of the priority actions for vulture conservation. The Ministry has requested the State Governments for taking necessary actions as per the Action Plan.
- (c) and (d) As per information available in the Ministry, the population of three species of Vultures, viz., *Gyps indicus*, *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps tenuirostris*, had drastically declined during the 1990s. However, due to the concerted efforts by the Government, the population of these vulture species have stabilized now.

The population estimation of other species of Vultures are not collated in the Ministry.

The important steps taken by the Government to save the vultures and increase their number are as follows:

- i. All the species of Vultures have been listed in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ii. The Action Plan for Vulture Conservation was implemented in India from 2006-2009.
- iii. In August 2006, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) banned the use, sale and manufacture of veterinary diclofenac. Government of India has restricted the vial size of the drug diclofenac to 3mL to prevent its misuse in treating livestock.
- iv. Safety testing of various veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, available in the market to identify their toxicity to vultures
- v. Establishing vulture safe zones in different parts of the country for conservation of the remnant population of vultures
- vi. Raising awareness especially among users of veterinary formulations
- vii. Ministry sponsored films 'The Last Flight' and 'Vanishing Vultures' are frequently telecasted on radio and television in order to raise awareness on vulture conservation. States have been requested to develop education and awareness materials, keeping the Animal Husbandry sectors and farmers in mind.
- viii. A National Vulture Recovery Committee was constituted by the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Additional Director General of Forest (Wildlife).
- ix. Eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centers have been established in India.
- x. The Indian Veterinary Research Institute led a research study to identify a safe alternative to diclofenac by carrying out safety-testing of the shortlisted drug meloxicam on vultures, in collaboration with BNHS and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, an international bird conservation organization based in the United Kingdom. Meloxicam was proved to be safe for vultures and was promoted as an alternative to diclofenac.
- xi. India has recently launched an Action Plan for Vulture Conservation (2020-2025) on 9th November, 2020.
- xii. Government of India provides funding support to the States under Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitats for conservation of Vultures under the Species Recovery Programme.
