

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 372**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.07.2024

**Protection of Elephants**

372. SMT. SANGEETA YADAV:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the number of elephants in the country is going down;
- (b) if so, the details of efforts made for conservation of elephants;
- (c) the manner in which Government is tackling the fragmentation of their habitat; and
- (d) the funds allocated and utilized for management of elephant habitats and elephant protection during the last five years?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) The details of elephant population estimation in the country over the years are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>
Elephant population	27669-27719	29391-30711	29964

- (b)to(d) The management of wildlife habitats including elephant is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/UTs Administration. Considerable part of the Elephant Reserves are overlapping with Tiger Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Reserved and Protected Forest areas, which are protected under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other State local Acts. The activities are regulated as per existing Acts, Rules and Guidelines.

The Ministry has taken following measures for conservation of elephants and their habitat:

- (i) The Ministry is providing financial and technical assistance to States/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Project Tiger & Elephant for protection of elephants, their habitat and corridors, to address issues of man-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants in the country. Details of the budget

allocated and utilized for the above said activities, in the last five financial years, are given in **Annexure**.

- (ii) Other various Centrally Sponsored Schemes including Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat being implemented by this Ministry contribute to the improvement in the natural habitat of elephants by augmenting water sources, planting of fodder trees, regeneration of bamboo etc. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 and the Rules made there under also provide for use of the Fund for development of wildlife habitats, including for elephants, establishment of animal rescue centres, etc. which also contribute to reduction in HEC.
- (iii) An advisory on dealing with human-wildlife conflict has been issued by the Ministry in February, 2021. The advisory recommends coordinated inter-departmental action, identification of conflict hot spots, adherence to Standard Operating Procedures, establishment of rapid response teams, formation of State and District level committees to review the quantum of ex-gratia relief, issuing guidance/instructions for expedited payments, and provision of adequate funds for suitable portion of ex-gratia relief to be paid within 24 hours to the affected persons in the case of death and injury to persons.
- (iv) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also issued Guidelines to States/UTs on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022 on managing Human Wildlife conflicts including damage to crops. It includes promotion of crops in forest fringe areas which are unpalatable to wild animals, agro forestry models which include cash crops like chillies, lemon grass, khus grass etc. suitably mixed with tree/shrub species. It also includes preparation and implementation of comprehensive long-term plan for alternate cropping by the state Agriculture/Horticulture Department under different schemes in vulnerable areas.
- (v) The Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in consultation with the Ministry of Environment Forest, and Climate Change, National Highway Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority and World Bank Group has published a document namely 'Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure' (2016) to assist project agencies in designing linear infrastructure, including railways lines, in a manner that reduces human-animal conflicts.
- (vi) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in coordination with the State Forest Departments, have ground-validated 150 elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states (i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal) in India and informed the State Governments/UT Administrations to take necessary steps to protect and conserve the elephant corridors.
- (vii) Critical elephant habitats are notified as 'Elephant Reserve' for focus and synergy in elephant conservation and to reduce conflict. The notification is carried out with the approval of Steering Committee formed in the Ministry. So far 33 Elephant Reserves have been established in 14 major elephant States.

- (viii) A field manual for frontline staff to manage Human Elephant Conflict was released during the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.
- (ix) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides regulatory functions for dealing with human wildlife conflict situations.
- (x) A general advisory has been issued jointly by Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment and Forests on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 to the General Managers of North Frontier (NF), East Cost and Southern Railways with a request to implement the suggested measures.
- (xi) Advisory on implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of power transmission lines and other power infrastructure on elephant and other wildlife issued by Ministry of Power to all DISCOMs and TRANSCOs has been circulated to all States/UTS on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.
- (xii) Ministry also released a Guidelines for Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation-Taking a Harmonious Coexistence Approach (2023) for addressing human-elephant conflicts.
- (xiii) To reduce man-elephant conflict and to avoid retaliatory killing of elephants. Compensation is provided to local communities for loss of their property and life caused by wild elephants. The Ministry has notified enhancement of ex-gratia rates related to wildlife depredation vide letter No. WL-21/4/2023 WL dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2023, which includes increase in ex-gratia from ₹5lakh to ₹10 lakh in case of death by wild animals.
- (xiv) A permanent Co-ordination Committee has been constituted between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for preventing elephant death in train accident.
- (xv) Inter-ministerial meeting convened regularly with the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Power to holistically address the issue of accidental death of elephant due to train hit and electrocution.
- (xvi) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Mainstreaming Management of The Elephant Reserves” was conducted on 13 -15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xvii) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Minimizing the Impact of the Railway on Elephants and Other Wildlife” for the officials of Indian Railways was conducted on 23-25<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xviii) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Mainstreaming Management of The Elephant Reserves was conducted on 28- 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
- (xix) A Capacity Building Workshop on “Exploring solution for minimizing electrocution risk and promoting wildlife safety across power infrastructure in India” was conducted on 11- 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

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**ANNEXURE**

**REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) to (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 372 RAISED BY SMT. SANGEETA YADAV REGARDING 'PROTECTION OF ELEPHANTS' DUE FOR REPLY ON 25.07.2024.**

**Budget allocated and released under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme – Project Tiger & Elephant**

(₹ in crores)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget Estimate</b>	<b>Revised Estimate</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
2019-20	30.00	33.04	32.85
2020-21	35.00	25.00	24.96
2021-22	33.00	32.00	30.26
2022-23	35.00	16.36	16.30
2023-24*	336.80	244.60	243.75

\* The Project Tiger and Project Elephant Scheme has been merged from FY 2023-24 and now known as Project Tiger & Elephant.

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