

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1655
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2025

Conservation of Olive Ridley turtles at Velas Sea beach

1655. SHRI DHAIRYASHIL MOHAN PATIL:

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

- (a) the major challenges in conservation of Olive Ridley turtles at Velas Sea beach;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to promote eco-tourism while protecting turtle nests; and
- (c) Whether Government is collaborating with local communities and NGOs and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (c) Protection and management of the wildlife including turtle conservation is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments and Union Territory administrations. The important steps taken by the Government for the conservation and protection of critically endangered species, including marine turtles and its habitats are as follows:
- i. A National Marine Turtle Action Plan (2021-2026) has been released by the Ministry with the aim to conserve marine turtles and their habitats for maintaining a healthy marine ecosystem. The Action Plan is implemented through a coordinated and participatory mechanism to ensure long term survival of marine turtles.
 - ii. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued guidelines for sustainable ecotourism in forest and wildlife areas in October 2021. The guidelines lays emphasis on involvement of local communities in ecotourism activities.
 - iii. The local communities are involved in conservation measures through eco-development activities, which help the forest department in protection of wildlife.

- iv. Financial assistance is provided to States/UTs for conservation of wildlife and its habitat under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' which also includes for undertaking ecotourism related activities.
- v. Awareness related activities like beach monitoring, educational activities, turtle festivals etc are organized in various coastal States with active engagement with local fishing communities.
- vi. A network of Protected Areas (National parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves) has been created in the country for conservation and protection of the wildlife.
- vii. Five species of marine turtles occurring in the Indian waters have been included in the Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby providing them the highest degree of protection from hunting.
- viii. A specific component of 'Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats' is included in the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats' for focused conservation action on 22 critically endangered species, which also includes marine turtles.
- ix. Notification of several beaches as conservation priority areas for regular monitoring and management following the guidelines of the State Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) I.
- x. Wild Life Crime Control Bureau coordinates with State/UTs and other enforcement agencies to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles.
