

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:557

ANSWERED ON:28.02.2000

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES .

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

(a) whether unchecked trawling is threatening India's precious maritime resources especially the Olive Ridley turtles on the shores of Orissa; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to protect them from illegal fishing by the trawlers on the Orissa Coast?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS

(SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI)

(a) Despite all efforts, some fishing related casualties of marine resources especially of Olive Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) are occurring in the Orissa coast.

(b) A number of steps have been taken to protect casualties of these turtles which are as follows:-

1. Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) has been kept in the Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, in which case punishment for the offence may extend to six years imprisonment with fine of Rupees Five thousand.

2. All the nesting sites of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles have been declared as 'No Fishing Zone' under 'Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1982' and rules made thereunder. These 3 nesting sites are :

(i) Coastal waters in front of Gahirmatha between Dhamra river mouth to Hukitola Island.

(ii) Coastal waters in front of Devi river mouth.

(iii) Coastal waters in front of Rushikulya river mouth.

3. Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary has been notified on 27-9-1997 covering GahirmathaSea Turtles breeding as well as nesting grounds and surrounding coastal waters.

4. High Power Committee have been set up under the chairmanship of Chief Minister of Orissa since 1996 to review/monitor the conservation aspects of sea turtles.

5. Regular patrolling by Forest Department boats for preventing violation of Fishing Regulation Act, 1982 and Wildlife Act, 1972 are carried out in the best interest of maritime resources including sea turtles. State Police also assist the Forest Department in apprehending the illegal fishing with the sanctuary limits. Some fishing boats which have violated the provisions of Wildlife Act have been seized and crews were prosecuted under the provisions of this Act. Fisheries Department, Govt. of Orissa has prescribed the use of TED (Turtle Exclusion Device) to the fishing net. 6. Indian Coast Guards of Government of India also patrol the area in high sea along the above mentioned nesting grounds of sea turtles to prevent illegal fishing and trawling.

7 Protection camps with communication facilities are set up at strategic points for protection of marine resources.

8. Public awareness campaigns are carried out through media (AIR and Doordarshan) and NGOs like WWF-India, Wildlife Protection Society of India, etc. Awareness programmes are also carried by involving the local people specially the fishing communities.

9. Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has initiated a SeaTurtle Conservation Project primarily to safeguard the Olive Ridley Sea Turtles in Orissa and East Coast of India. The project is initially for a period of two years and is planned to be extended for a longer period.