

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3013

ANSWERED ON:05.09.2007

ILLEGAL TRADE OF ANIMAL BODY PARTS

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

- (a) whether there is a well organised poaching network having links with international operators in the clandestine trade of animal body parts;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of poaching incidents reported alongwith skins of Tigers/Leopards or other wild animals recovered during the last three years, State-wise and year-wise;
- (d) the number of persons including forest officials convicted/penalized for poaching under the Wild Life Protection Act during the said period, State-wise; and
- (e) the effective steps taken/being taken to check poaching and illegal trade of animal body parts?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a) & (b) In view of the lucrative demand for wildlife and its derivatives in clandestine international markets, the possibility of organized poaching network having links with international operators cannot be ruled out. Important wildlife parts & products which are smuggled out of India include parts of tiger, leopard, rhino, bear, musk deer, turtle, tortoise, Tibetan antelope etc. These are mainly used for traditional medicines, traditional tonics including wines, religious relics, carvings, decorative items, clothing, bags, etc.

(c) As per the information available, the State-wise details of poaching/seizure incidents involving major species, namely, tiger, leopard, elephant, rhino, star tortoise, bear, musk deer and otter during the last three years are at Annexure.

(d) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

(e) The steps taken to check poaching and illegal trade of animal body parts include:

i) Legal protection has been provided to endangered wild animals, including Tiger, Lion, Elephant, Leopard, Rhino, Wild Buffalo, Tibetan Antelope, Marine turtles, Corals, etc, against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

ii) The Wildlife (Protection) Act has been amended and made more stringent. The punishments in cases of offences have been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence.

iii) The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

iv) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

v) The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas

vi) National Parks and Sanctuaries have been created as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to provide better protection to wildlife and their habitat.

vii) Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State/Union Territory Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz, 'Development of National Parks & Sanctuaries', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection to wild animals.

viii) Strict vigil is maintained through effective communication system.