

Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle

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Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle Latest News

Recently, India's first satellite-tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle was released in the 1,302 sq. km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam.

About Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle

- It is one of the **largest freshwater turtle** species in the world.
- It is also known as **the Indian softshell turtles** (*Nilssonia gangetica*)
- **Appearance**
 - It **has carapace** (upper shell), which is round to oval shaped, and **green in colour with a yellow border**.
 - It has a long neck and tube-like snouts help them to **extend their nose out of the water to breathe**.
 - The compressed shell, on the other hand, streamlines them, thereby making them brilliant and fast swimmers.

- **Habitat:** These turtles inhabit **deep rivers, streams, canals, lakes and ponds**, typically preferring areas with sandy or muddy bottoms.
- They **thrive in turbid water** and spend most of their time hidden under the sand.
- **Geographical Distribution:** They are found in **Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan**.
 - Mainly found in Indus, Ganges, **Meghna, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, Narmada and Mahanandi** river basins.
- **Diet:** Indian softshell **turtles are omnivorous**, feeding on fish, amphibians, mollusks, insects, carrion and aquatic plants.
- These turtles breed from February to April.
- **Cultural Significance:** These are often maintained in the **temple ponds of Orissa** where they are considered sacred.
- **Threat:** Habitat alteration and destruction, Poaching and illegal trading for traditional medicines, expansion of agriculture, commercial exploitation.

Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I.

Source: **TH**

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