

Indian Star Tortoise

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Indian Star Tortoise Latest News

A slow-moving star-shelled tortoise was rescued and safely relocated to another part of the forest while escaping a fast-spreading ground fire in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve.

About Indian Star Tortoise

- It is a **medium-sized terrestrial** tortoise.
- Scientific Name: *Geochelone elegans*.
- Their name comes from the **star-like pattern on their shell**.
- **These patterns act as camouflage** by helping to break up the shell outline so that it more easily blends into its surroundings.
- **Distribution:** It is native to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka where it inhabits dry areas and scrub forest.

Indian Star Tortoise Features

- It can grow to 10 inches long. **Females** are considerably **larger** than their male counterparts.
- The **upper shell or carapace** is coloured in **dark brown or black** with **light brown or yellow lines radiating out from the centre of each scale** to provide the **star pattern**.

- The **pattern itself varies greatly** from a simple pale 'X' shape in some tortoises to an intricate and complex array of stripes spreading from the central hub of each scale.
- It has a **lifespan** of **35 to 80 years** in the wild.
- These **solitary** animals **do not hibernate**, but **when it is very dry and hot, or very cold, they stay inactive**.

Indian Star Tortoise Conservation Status

It is classified as '**Vulnerable**' under the IUCN Red List.

Key Facts about Amrabad Tiger Reserve

- It is located in the **Nallamala hills of the Eastern Ghats in Telangana** state.
- Spread over 2611.4 sq.km., it is **one of the largest tiger reserves** in India.
- It was **originally part of the larger Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve before the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in 2014**.
- The reserve is renowned for its rugged terrain, deep valleys, and dense forests.
- Within the reserve lies the historic **Nagalapuram fort**.
- The **Krishna River** and its perennial streams originating within the reserve contribute to the **water supply of major reservoirs** such as the **Srisailem Dam and Nagarjunsagar Dam**.
- The **Chenchu tribe** is one of the major tribal communities that live in the ATR.
- **Flora:**
 - It is characterized by **dry deciduous forests**, primarily made up of **sal, teak, bamboo**, and acacia trees.
 - The forest is rich in **medicinal plants and shrubs**, which have long been used by local tribes for traditional remedies.
- **Fauna:**
 - Apart from tigers, the reserve supports a range of other big cats, such as **leopards and wild cats**, along with herbivores like **sambar deer, chital** (spotted deer), nilgai (blue bull), wild boar, and the Indian bison (gaur).
 - Over 303 bird species have been identified in this region. Some important groups include Eagles, Pigeons, Doves, Cuckoos, Woodpeckers, Drongos, etc.

Source: DC

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