

Horseshoe Crabs

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About Horseshoe crab:

- It belongs to a **class called Merostomata**, living fossils, or those organisms that haven't changed in millennia.
- It is a marine **chelicerate arthropod**. The Chelicerata is a division within the Arthropoda, containing animals such as spiders, scorpions, harvestmen, mites and ticks.
- Like all arthropods, they **have a segmented body** and segmented limbs and a thick chitinous cuticle called an exoskeleton.
- **Habitat:** They are living in **shallow coastal waters** on soft sandy or muddy bottoms and spawns mostly on **intertidal beaches** at summer-spring high tides.
- There are **four extant horseshoe crab** species:

- The **American horseshoe crab** (*Limulus polyphemus*) along the eastern coast of the USA and in the Gulf of Mexico,
 - The **tri-spine horseshoe crab** (*Tachypleus tridentatus*),
 - The coastal horseshoe crab (*Tachypleus gigas*)
 - The mangrove horseshoe crab (*Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda*)
 - The last three are **Indo-Pacific species** found mainly in the coastal waters of India, Southeast Asia, China and Japan.
 - In India Odisha is the largest habitat of horseshoe crabs
 - **Conservation status in India**
 - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972**: Schedule IV
 - **IUCN Status**
 - **American horseshoe crab**: Vulnerable
 - **Tri-spine horseshoe crab**: Endangered
 - The two other species are not listed yet
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Q1: What are Arthropods?

These are invertebrates with jointed legs. They make up about 75% of all animals on Earth and have a major role in maintaining ecosystems as pollinators, recyclers of nutrients, scavengers and food for other animals.

Source: [The blue-blooded sea creature on Odisha's coastline](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/horseshoe-crabs/>

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