



Indian Flapshell Turtles

Why in News

Recently, forest officials from Odisha found **40 Indian flapshell turtles** in baskets in an alleged smuggling racket.



Key Points

▪ About:

- The **Indian flapshell turtle** is a **freshwater species of turtle** and is found in many states.
 - The **“flap-shelled”** name stems from the presence of femoral flaps located on the plastron. These flaps of skin cover the limbs when they retract into the shell.
 - It is a **relatively small soft-shell turtle** with a carapace length of up to 350 millimetres.
- **Scientific Name:** *Lissemys punctata*

▪ Distribution:

- They are found in **Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh (Indus and Ganges drainages), and Myanmar** (Irrawaddy and Salween Rivers).
- They live in the **shallow, quiet, often stagnant waters** of rivers, streams, marshes, ponds, lakes and irrigation canals, and tanks.
- These turtles prefer waters with sand or mud bottoms because of their tendency to burrow.

▪ Conservation Status:

- [IUCN Red List](#): Vulnerable
- [CITES](#): Appendix II
- [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I

▪ **Threats:**

- Turtles are **smuggled and killed** for their supposed aphrodisiac properties, livestock feed, to make leather from their skins, to make potions from their blood and to use as fishing bait.
- Turtles are also used for meat and medicines.

▪ **Steps Taken for Conservation:**

◦ [KURMA App](#):

- It has a **built-in digital field guide** covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India.
- It was developed by the **Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN)** in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India.

- [World Turtle Day](#) is observed every year on **23rd May**.

[Source: DTE](#)

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