Indian Star Tortoise

Source: TH

The Indian star tortoise (Geochelone elegans) faces severe threats from habitat loss, illegal trade, and genetic disruption, making its conservation a critical priority.

- Appearance: It has an obsidian shell with striking Sun-yellow star patterns.
- Habitat: It is native to the Indian subcontinent and is found in northwestern India, South India, and Sri Lanka in arid grasslands and savannahs.
- Conservation Status: Listed as Vulnerable under IUCN Red List, Appendix I of <u>CITES</u>.
- Threat: According to the <u>Wildlife Crime Control Bureau</u>, 90% of the trade of Star Tortoise occurs as part of the international pet market.
- Genetic Study Insights: Researchers identified two distinct groups of Indian star tortoises: Northwestern (genetically stable) and Southern (genetically diverse).
 - **Microsatellite markers** were used to **track genetic relationships** and population changes.
 - Microsatellite markers are short <u>DNA</u> sequences that repeat in a particular location in the genome.

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