



KURMA App

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Why in News

KURMA is a mobile-based application aimed at turtle conservation. It was launched on the occasion of **World Turtle Day (23rd May)**.

Key Points

- **About:** It is developed by the **Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN)** in collaboration with the **Turtle Survival Alliance-India** and **Wildlife Conservation Society-India**.

The KURMA App has a built-in digital field guide covering **29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoise of India**, and information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats.
- **Objective:** It provides users a **database to identify a species**.
 - Provides the **location of the nearest rescue centre** for turtles across the country.
 - Advices about the reported species and its conservation.
 - Once a sizable database is ready, KURMA will start identifying species **automatically** through **artificial intelligence**.
- **Present Scenario:** Tortoise and freshwater turtles are among the most trafficked in the country.

A report released in 2019 by **TRAFFIC**, showed that at least 11,000 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every year, adding up to over 1,11,130 turtles poached or smuggled between September 2009 and September 2019.
- **Conservation Challenge:** One of the major challenges for freshwater turtle conservation in the country is that wildlife crime prevention agencies are **not sufficiently equipped** to know how to distinguish one species from the other.

They are also not aware of their protection status in accordance with **CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)** and the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.

Turtle Survival Alliance

- The Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) was **formed in 2001** as an **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** partnership for sustainable captive management of freshwater turtles and tortoises.
- The TSA arose in response to the **rampant and unsustainable harvest of Asian turtle populations to supply Chinese markets**, a situation known as the **Asian Turtle Crisis**.
- **Mission: ‘Zero Turtle Extinctions in the 21st Century’.**

Source: TH