



# Black Softshell Turtle

## Why in News

Recently, the **Assam forest department** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with two **Non-governmental Organizations** (NGOs) and adopted a **Vision Document to raise at least 1,000 black softshell turtles by 2030.**



## Key Points

### ▪ About Black Softshell Turtle:

- **Scientific Name:** *Nilssonina nigricans*
- **Features:**
  - They look almost the same as the **Indian peacock softshell turtle** (*Nilssonina hurum*), which is classified as **Endangered** in the **IUCN Red List.**
- **Habitat:**
  - A **freshwater species** and there are 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises found in India.
  - They are found in **ponds of temples** in **northeastern India and Bangladesh.** Its distribution range also includes the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries.
- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
  - **CITES:** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** No legal protection
- **Threats:**
  - Consumption of turtle meat and eggs, silt mining, encroachment of wetlands and change in flooding pattern.

### ▪ Sea Turtles of Indian Waters:

- There are five species in Indian waters i.e. [Olive Ridley](#), [Green turtle](#), [Loggerhead](#), **Hawksbill**, **Leatherback**.
  - The **Olive Ridley**, **Leatherback** and **Loggerhead** are listed as '**Vulnerable**' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
  - The **Hawksbill turtle** is listed as '**Critically Endangered**' and **Green Turtle** is listed as '**Endangered**' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
    - They are protected in **Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**, under **Schedule I**.
- **Turtle Conservation:**
  - **National Marine Turtle Action Plan:**
    - It contains ways and means to not only **promote inter-sectoral action for conservation** but also guide improved coordination amongst the government, civil society and all relevant stakeholders on the response to cases of stranding, entanglement, injury or mortality of marine mammals and also conservation of marine turtles.
  - **Indian Ocean Sea Turtle Agreement (IOSEA):**
    - India is a signatory to the **Indian Ocean Sea Turtle Agreement (IOSEA)** of the [Convention on Migratory Species \(CMS\)](#), a [United Nations](#) backed initiative.
    - It puts in place a **framework** through which **States of the Indian Ocean** and **South-East Asian region**, as well as other concerned States, can work together to conserve and replenish depleted **marine turtle populations** for which they share responsibility.
  - [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 **23<sup>rd</sup> May**.

[Source: TH](#)

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