



Leith's Soft-shelled Turtle

Why in News?

At its [19th Meeting in Panama](#), the Conference of Parties to CITES adopted **India's proposal to move Leith's Softshell Turtle from Appendix II to Appendix I.**

- India's proposal for inclusion of **Jeypore Hill Gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis*) in Appendix II.

What is the Significance of the Listing?

- The CITES Appendix I listing of this Turtle species **would ensure that legal international trade in the species** does not take place for commercial purposes.
- It would also **ensure that international trade in captive-bred specimens only takes place from registered facilities** and further that higher and more proportionate penalties are provided for illegal trade of the species.
- The listing of the Leith's soft-shell turtle, thereby, **strengthens its CITES protection status to ensure better survival of the species.**

What is Leith's Soft-shelled Turtle?

- **About:**
 - Leith's Softshell Turtle (*Nilssonina leithii*) is a **large freshwater soft-shelled turtle** which is endemic to peninsular India and it inhabits rivers and reservoirs.
- **Threats:**
 - The species has been subject to intensive exploitation over the past 30 years.
 - It has been poached and illegally consumed within India. It has also been illegally traded abroad for meat and for its calipee.
 - The population of this turtle species is **estimated to have declined by 90% over the past 30 years** such that the species is now difficult to find.
- **Protection Status:**
 - The [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Red List](#): Critically Endangered
 - [Wildlife Protection Act \(WPA\)](#): Schedule IV
 - **CITES**: Appendix I

[Source: PIB](#)