



Spotted Pond Turtles

Why in News?

Three persons engaged as mahouts (keepers and drivers of an elephant) in the [Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, Assam](#), have been arrested for capturing and consuming **spotted pond turtles, a rare species of a freshwater turtle.**

- The incident has raised concerns about the illegal consumption of protected species by park employees, leading to investigations and arrests.

What are Spotted Pond Turtles?

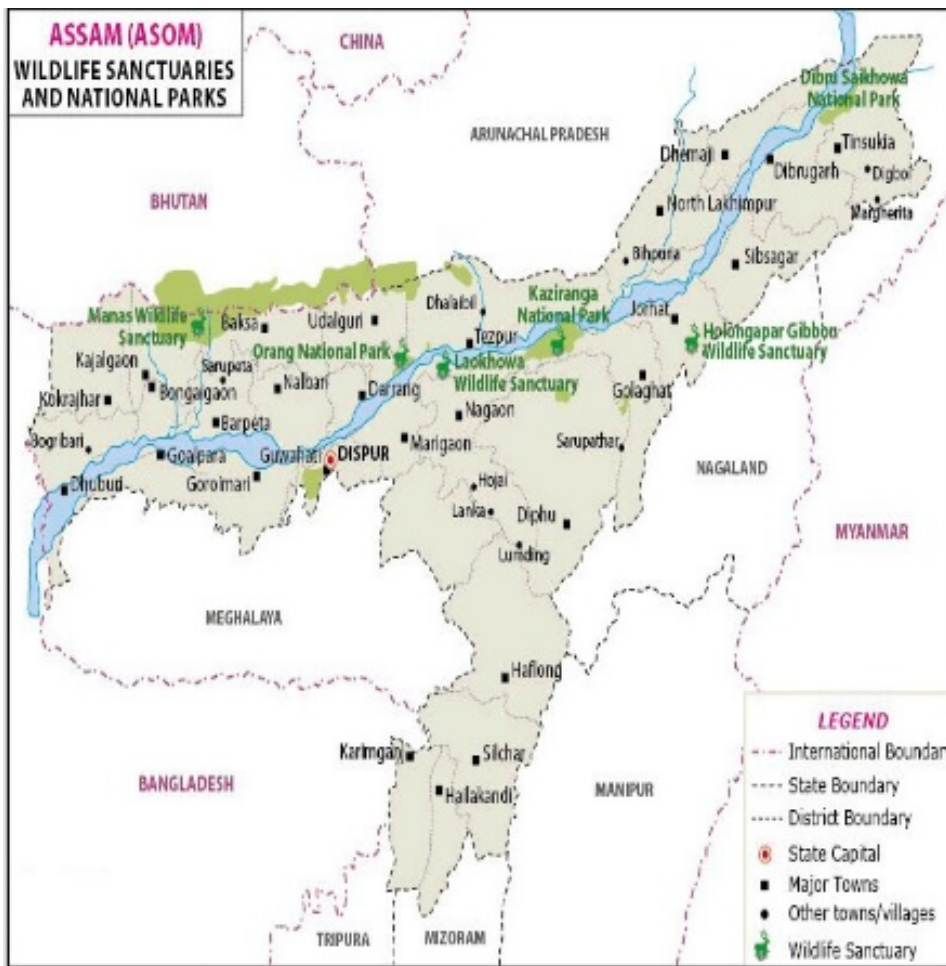
- **About:** Spotted pond turtles(*Geoclemys hamiltonii*) are named for the yellow or white spots on their black heads, legs and tails. They have large heads and short snouts, and their webbed feet help them swim.
 - They are also known as **Black Pond Turtle, Black Spotted Turtle, Hamilton's Terrapin.**
 - They bask in the sun to regulate their body temperature. Their need for warm water and an intense basking area is important.
 - When they retreat into their shells, spotted pond turtles make a **soft croak.**
- **Range and Habitat:** They are found in large, deep rivers in India, Assam, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
 - In India, the species is distributed across the **north, northeast and a few parts of central India**
- **Diet Requirements:** These turtles are primarily [carnivorous](#) and eat aquatic invertebrates.
- **Sleep Habits:** Spotted pond turtles are [crepuscular](#), meaning they are most active at twilight (dusk and dawn).
- **Conservation Status:**
 - [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) : **Endangered**
 - [CITES](#) : **Appendix I**

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What are the Key Facts about Kaziranga National Park?

- **Location:** It is in the **State of Assam** and covers **42,996 Hectare (ha)**. It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.
- **Legal Status:**
 - It was declared as a **National Park in 1974**.
 - It has been declared a **tiger reserve** since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.
- **International Status:**
 - It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in **1985**.
 - It is recognized as an **Important Bird Area** by **BirdLife International**.
- **Important Species Found:**
 - It is the home of the world's most **one-horned rhinos**. **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** has the **highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world** and second highest number of Rhinos in Assam after Kaziranga National Park.
 - Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the '**big four**' species— **Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo**.
 - Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of **primates found** in the Indian subcontinent.
- **Rivers and Highways:**
 - The National Highway 37 passes through the park area.
 - The park also has more than 250 seasonal water bodies, besides the **Diphlu River** running through it.
- Other **National Parks in Assam** are:
 - Dibru-Saikhowa National Park,
 - **Manas National Park**,
 - Nameri National Park,
 - Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2013)

	National Park	River flowing through the park
1.	Corbett National Park	Ganga
2.	Kaziranga National Park	Manas
3.	Silent Valley National Park	Kaveri

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) None

Ans: (d)

Q. Consider the following fauna of India: (2013)

1. Gharial
2. Leatherback turtle
3. Swamp deer

Which of the above is/are endangered?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) None

Ans: (c)

[Source: TH](#)

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