



Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle

Why in News

In recent years, **a lot of efforts** have been put by the conservationists to save the **world's most endangered turtle**, Swinhoe's softshell turtle from the brink of extinction.

- The animal is also known as the **Hoan Kiem turtle or Yangtze giant softshell turtle**.
- In **Vietnam**, these animals have **great cultural significance** as people in Hanoi revere this creature as a **living god**.



Key Points

- **Scientific Name:** *Rafetus swinhoei*
 - These turtles are **gray with light gray or yellow spots**.
- **Significance:**
 - Some researchers have highlighted their **importance to the seafloor biosystem**, where they contribute by enriching soil nutrients and facilitating seed dispersion.
- **Habitat:**
 - The natural habitat for these turtles are **wetlands and large lakes**.
 - Native to **China and Vietnam**.
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
 - **CITES:** Appendix II
- **Threats:**

- They have been driven to the brink by hunting for its meat and eggs, as well as by destruction of its habitat.

Source: DTE

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