



## Red Crowned Roofed Turtle

**For Prelims:** Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, IUCN, Batagur kachuga, Bengal Roofed turtle.

**For Mains:** Red Crowned Roofed Turtle.

### Why in News?

India has proposed to protect the [Red-Crowned Roofed turtle](#) at the 19th Conference of the Parties to [CITES \(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species\)](#) in **Panama**.

### What are the Highlights of the Conference?

- India has raised a proposal to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species on Wild Fauna and Flora for the addition of the riverine species to **Appendix I from current Appendix II**.
  - The species covered by CITES are listed in **three Appendices as per the degree of protection** they need:
    - Appendix I** includes species threatened with extinction.
    - Appendix II** includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction but (where trade must be controlled).
    - Appendix III** contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES parties for assistance in controlling the trade.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to CITES is being asked to consider stricter trade regulations **for nearly six hundred species of animals and plants believed to be under increased threat of extinction from international trade**.

### What is a Red Crowned Roofed Turtle?

- Scientific Name:** *Batagur kachuga*.
- Common Names:** Bengal roof turtle, Red-crowned roofed turtle.
- About:**
  - Red Crowned Roofed Turtle is one of the **24 species endemic to India**, is characterised by the bright colours such as red, yellow, white and blue on the faces and necks of the males.



▪ **Distribution:**

- It is a **freshwater turtle species found in deep flowing rivers** with terrestrial nesting sites.
- The Red-crowned roofed turtle is **native to India, Bangladesh and Nepal**.
- Historically, the species was **widespread in the Ganga River**, both in India and Bangladesh. It also occurs in the Brahmaputra basin.
- Currently in India, the **National Chambal River Gharial Sanctuary is the only area with a substantial population of the species**, but even this Protected Area and habitat are under threat.

▪ **Threats:**

- The species is highly **susceptible to major hydrological projects and their impacts** on river flow dynamics and nesting beaches, and water pollution. Since human activities on and along the river are disturbing, the entanglement in fishing nets has led to a significant impact on subpopulations.
- Degradation of **habitat due to pollution and large-scale development activities** like water extraction for human consumption and irrigation and irregular flow from the upstream dams and reservoirs are the main threats to these species.
- Sand mining and **growing of seasonal crops** along Ganga River are majorly affecting the sandbars along the river that are used by the species for nesting.
- Overharvesting the animal for **illegal consumption and illegal international trade are other reasons** for its extinction threat.
  - Over 11,000 tortoises and freshwater turtles have been seized in India from 2009-2019, found a study by TRAFFIC, a global NGO working on trade in wild animals and plants and their conservation.

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List**: Critically Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act (WPA)**: Schedule I
- **CITES** : Appendix II

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**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)

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