



# Red Crowned Roofed Turtle

## Why in News?

The [Red Crowned Roofed Turtle](#) has **returned to the [Ganga River](#)** after an absence of **three decades** .

- This success is a **historic biodiversity conservation achievement** under the [Namami Gange Mission](#) and the [Turtle Survival Alliance India \(TSAFI\)](#) project.



## Key Points

- **About the Red Crowned Roofed Turtle:**
  - **Scientific name:** Batagur kachuga.
  - **Common Names:** Bengal Roof Turtle, Red Crowned Roofed Turtle.
- **About:**
  - The Red Crown Roofed Turtle **is one of the 24 species endemic to India** , the males of which are characterized by bright colours like red, yellow, white and blue on the face and neck.
- **Distribution:**
  - **It is a freshwater turtle species found in deep-flowing rivers with nesting sites.**
  - Historically the species **was widespread in the Ganges River in both India and Bangladesh.** It is also found in the Brahmaputra basin.
  - Currently the [National Chambal River Gharial Sanctuary in India](#) is the only area **that has a significant population of the species**, but this protected area and habitat are also now under threat.
  - **Large coastal and riverine projects disrupt river flow** and increase water pollution.
  - Subpopulations suffer due to **entanglement in fishing nets and disturbances from human activity.**
  - **Pollution, irrigation-related water extraction, and unregulated dam flows** degrade natural habitats.
  - **Sand bar habitats** used for hunting are shrinking due to **increased mining** and seasonal agriculture along the Ganga River.

- Overharvesting for **illegal consumption and international wildlife trade** poses a serious threat.
- **Protection Status:**
  - [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Red List](#): **Critically Endangered**
  - [Wildlife Protection Act \(WPA\), 1972](#): **Schedule I**
  - [CITES](#): **Appendix II**
- **Rehabilitation**
  - The turtles were released in **the Haiderpur wetland in Uttar Pradesh**. This area is located along the river Ganga and its ecosystem was considered **suitable for the rehabilitation of turtles**.
    - The turtles were divided into two groups – one was released in the upper part of the Ganga Barrage and the other in the lower part.
  - **Each turtle is fitted with a tracking device to monitor** their movements and adaptation to the environment.

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## Turtle Survival Alliance India (TSAFI)

- TSAFI represents the **Indian chapter of the global Turtle Survival Alliance**, which is committed to **protecting freshwater turtles and tortoises worldwide**.
- It works to **safeguard turtles and tortoises** from major threats such as **habitat destruction, illegal wildlife trade**, and the impacts of **climate change**.
- The organisation undertakes diverse initiatives, including:
  - Scientific research on turtle species and habitats
  - On-ground conservation projects
  - Public education and awareness campaigns
- TSAFI aims to ensure the **long-term survival of turtle species in India** by combining community involvement with scientific expertise.

## National Chambal Sanctuary

- The **National Chambal Sanctuary**, located at the trijunction of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh**.
  - It is a fragile lotic ecosystem, which is a critically important breeding ground for **gharials - fish-eating crocodiles**.
- The sanctuary is protected under the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#), and is listed as an **'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area'**.
- The sanctuary is also a **proposed Ramsar site**, and over 320 species of resident and migratory birds inhabit the area.

## Namami Gange Programme

- Namami Gange Programme is an integrated conservation mission, approved by the **Central Government in June 2014** as a **'Flagship Programme'** to achieve the twin objectives

of **effective abatement of pollution** and **conservation and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga**.

- It is being operated under the Ministry of Water Resources, Department of River Development and **Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti** .
- In the second phase of Namami Gange Programme (2021-26), the states will focus on speedy completion of projects and preparation of credible **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)** for projects in Ganga tributary towns.
- Attention is also being paid to the revival of **small rivers and wetlands**.

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