

## Indian Star Tortoises

Indian Star Tortoises are endangered animals, they are threatened with extinction. It is kept as pets, across homes in South East Asia, Europe and North America. Indian Star Tortoises are smuggled to countries like Japan and China as it is believed to bring good luck if it is kept as pets at home. It is also perceived to have medicinal values.

Due to the extremely high demand for Indian star tortoises, they continue to be smuggled from India to South-East Asian countries for a long time, despite many measures being taken by Customs Authorities of India and international regulations to stop the smuggling.

### Indian Star Tortoises - Laws for Protection

The Indian Star Tortoises are protected by different laws which are given below:

1. Wildlife Protection Act of 1972
2. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) - Indian Star Tortoises are listed in Appendix I. This is an international agreement that has come into force to ensure that the survival of different plant and wild animal species is not threatened due to international trade.
3. Indian Star Tortoise is a vulnerable species as per IUCN Red List.

Indian Star Tortoises are given the highest levels of protection from international commercial trade. As they were threatened with extinction, they were upgraded to CITES Appendix I in 2019. It was placed in Appendix II from 1975. Appendix I has the list of the most endangered species.

### Indian Star Tortoises - Measures for Protection

- India has also started creating a genetic database of the Indian Star Tortoise. Such an exercise was effectively used to protect Indian rhinos and tigers.
- Wildlife Institute of India (WII) will maintain a genetic profile.
- A repository of biological data is known as a Genetic database. This data could be anything that holds the DNA.

## Indian Star Tortoises - Distribution

- Indian Star Tortoises are found in India. It extends all the way to Sindh province in Pakistan.
- Indian Star Tortoises are also found in Sri Lanka.
- Indian Star Tortoises are found in scrub forests and dry areas.
- In India, they are found in the states of Odisha, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Punjab.

