

World Turtle Day

Turtles are magnificent creatures that appear mostly sedentary and low-key but are incredibly fascinating. They are part of one of the world's oldest reptile groups, which means they are older than snakes, crocodiles, and alligators. These organisms date back over 200 million years to the period of the dinosaurs. There are 300 different species of turtles in the world, with 129 of them being endangered. Every year, World Turtle Day is commemorated to promote awareness among humans about the importance of helping turtles live and prosper in their natural habitat.

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Every year on May 23, World Turtle Day is commemorated to educate people about what they can do to safeguard the turtle and tortoise ecosystems. It's also a celebration of the daily delight that these reptiles offer to so many people.

The American Tortoise Rescue (ATR), formed by husband-and-wife pair Susan Tellem and Marshall Thompson in 1990, established World Turtle Day. It's a non-profit organization that rescues and rehabilitates tortoises and turtles of all kinds.

International Turtle Day is observed in a variety of ways throughout the world. Turtle preservation is promoted through a variety of events and activities. On this day, some people also rescue turtles off roadways, and restore them to their native habitats. In addition, several courses and activities are taught in schools to promote awareness.

Common Current Affairs Facts about Turtles

Turtles are reptiles with strong shells that protect predators. They are one of the most ancient and primitive reptile groups, developing millions of years ago. As a result, turtles may be found in practically every environment on the planet.

The turtle order Testudines (or Chelonia) is divided into two suborders, Cryptodira and Pleurodira, and then further divided into 13 families, 75 genera, and over 300 species, according to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS).

The terms "turtle," "tortoise," and "terrapin" are sometimes used interchangeably as synonyms. However, the varieties of chelonians differ significantly.

Except for Antarctica, Turtles are highly adaptable and may be found on every continent. Southeastern North America and South Asia are home to most turtle species. According to Drs. Foster and Smith, a Wisconsin-based veterinarian firm, Europe has just five species.

Habitats of Turtles

Here are some examples of different turtle species and their habitats:

The Coral Triangle covers the waters of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, coastal East Africa, the Mesoamerican Reef in the Caribbean, and the Galápagos Islands. The Gulf of California, too, is home to sea turtles.

According to the San Diego Zoo, snake-necked turtles can only be found on Roti Island, a 62-square-mile (161-square-kilometre) Indonesian island.

Habits of these Creatures

Turtles are not friendly animals. They don't mind if other turtles are nearby, but they don't mingle with them. The majority of turtles are active throughout the day, searching for food. Turtles are not deafeningly quiet creatures. Some sound like electric motors, some like humans belching, while others bark like dogs. The South American red-footed tortoise clucks like a chicken.

International Turtle Day & Significance of Conservation

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified many turtle species as vulnerable, endangered, or severely endangered. The ploughshare tortoise and radiated tortoise, for example, are expected to become extinct in the next 45 years.

You might wonder why is it essential to save turtles? Turtles play significant roles in the ecosystem and are important for striking the correct balance. Here are a few reasons why turtles are extremely important for the globe (note these points for IAS preparation):

- Turtles control their prey population. Leatherbacks, for example, assist in the management of jellyfish in the water, while hawksbills aid reefs by devouring sponges that compete with them for space.
- Beaches benefit from turtle nesting- coastal vegetation benefits from the nutrients left behind by eggs and hatchlings that do not survive.
- Many animals rely on hatchlings as a source of food. During the nesting season, birds, fish, and mammals, such as raccoons rely on many hatchlings to live.
- They are vital to the economics of coastal towns and indigenous peoples. Many indigenous tribes regard sea turtles as part of their cultures, and many localities rely on turtle watching or diving for jobs and revenue.
- Green turtles feeding on seagrass are a vital part of maintaining the health of seagrass beds. Furthermore, suitable seagrass supports a variety of species while also storing carbon.

Sea turtles are necessary for a healthy ocean. Sea turtles are considered "keystone species," meaning they are a vital element of their habitat and impact other species. When a keystone species is removed from a habitat, the natural order is upset, which has a variety of consequences for other flora and fauna. This is why they should be conserved.