

UPSC Preparation

Northern River Terrapin

The Northern river terrapin is a rare freshwater turtle native to Southeast Asia. They are categorised as critically endangered by IUCN Red List.

Latest context: The forest officials installed GPS transmitters on Northern River Terrapin in Indian Sundarbans. After just six weeks after the release, at least three of the ten individuals of the critically endangered Northern River Terrapin (Batagur Baska) have travelled hundreds of kilometres and are now in Bangladesh.

About Northern River Terrapin

The Northern river terrapin is a rare freshwater turtle native to Southeast Asia. They are currently found in Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar. They are mostly aquatic but use terrestrial sites for nesting. The terrapins use areas like estuaries, rivers, and mangrove forests for nesting. Some important details about Northern river terrapins are given below

- **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN: Critically Endangered
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
 - CITES: Appendix I
- **Geography:** They are mostly found in Southeast Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.
- **Biome:** They live in biomes like mangroves, rivers, estuaries, wetlands, freshwater, coastal, marine etc
- **Climatic zone:** The northern River Terrapins are confined to the tropical zone.
- **Habitat and Lifestyle:** Northern river terrapins spend most of their time in water and only come on land to lay eggs. They are even known to undertake long seasonal migrations of 80-95 km to the sandbanks where they were hatched. Northern river terrapins are social creatures and are often seen basking together during the day. At night they rest in their burrows in the mud at low tide. They have an omnivorous diet, taking waterside plants and small animals such as clams.

Major Threats

- Hunting and harvesting of eggs.
- Pollution and loss of habitat including nesting beaches, mangrove forests and other food sources.

- Incidental drowning by getting trapped in fishing nets and traps, accidental death resulting from power boats.
- Destructive fishing practices, siltation and sedimentation due to watershed activities such as logging.

