# Red-crowned roofed turtle (Batagur kachuga)

**Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of national and international importance| General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.***

**Mains (GS I)** – *Conservation*

**Why in news?**

*After 30 years, 20 critically endangered red-crowned roofed turtles were reintroduced to the Ganga under Namami Gange Mission.*

- The red-crowned roofed turtle is a ***freshwater turtle species***.



- **Distribution** – It is native to India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- The species was widespread in the Ganga River, both in India and Bangladesh and it also occurs in the Brahmaputra basin.
- Substantial population of the species are found only in the *National Chambal River Gharial Sanctuary.*
- **Appearance** – The shells of these turtles can be as long as 56 cm and can weigh up to 25 kg.
- The *males are shorter and reach only half the length of females*.
- **Habitat** – Found in deep flowing rivers with terrestrial nesting sites.
- **Diet** – Exclusively of water plants.
- **Threats** – The turtles are at a high risk of extinction.
    - Habitat loss due to pollution and hydrological projects specific in the Gangal lowlands of northern India and Bangladesh.
    - Overharvesting the animal for illegal consumption and
    - Illegal international trade.
- **Conservation**
    - IUCN - Critically Endangered
    - IWPA – Schedule I
    - CITES – currently Appendix II (India proposed to move it to Appendix II)

## Decline of Red-crowned Roofed turtle

- The species were last documented in Ganga River by Rao in 1993.
- No viable populations of the species turtle found in entire Ganga system in last three decades.

## Reintroduction Program

- *20 turtles* were released into Haiderpur Wetland from Garhaita Turtle Conservation Center (National Chambal Sanctuary, UP).
- All turtles tagged with *sonic devices for monitoring*.
- The turtles were divided into two groups for Effective survival of the turtles,
    - One group was released above the barrage of Haiderpur Wetland.
    - While the other was released downstream in the main channel of the Ganga.

*Haiderpur Wetland, located in western Uttar Pradesh, India, was designated as a Ramsar site in April 2021.*

**References**


1. WII| Red Crowned Roofed Turtle
2. Hindustan Times| Red-crowned roofed turtles return to Ganga



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