

Three-striped Roofed Turtle

The Three-striped Roofed Turtle (*Batagur dhongoka*) is a large freshwater turtle species found in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. They are also commonly known as the Bengal Roofed Turtle or the Dhungar Turtle. In this article, we will focus on the features, habitat, food habits, breeding, conservation status, and places to see them in India.

General Features

The Three-striped Roofed Turtle is a large turtle species with a weight that can range from 10-20 kg and a length of up to 70 cm. They have a distinctive appearance, with three longitudinal stripes on their carapace or upper shell. The color of their shell varies from light brown to black, and their plastron or lower shell is yellowish in color.

Habitat and Distribution



In India, the Three-striped Roofed Turtle is found in the river systems of the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Mahanadi, as well as in the wetlands of Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. They prefer to live in deep pools and slow-moving rivers and are usually found in areas with a sandy or muddy

bottom. They spend most of their time in the water but can occasionally be seen basking on rocks or logs.

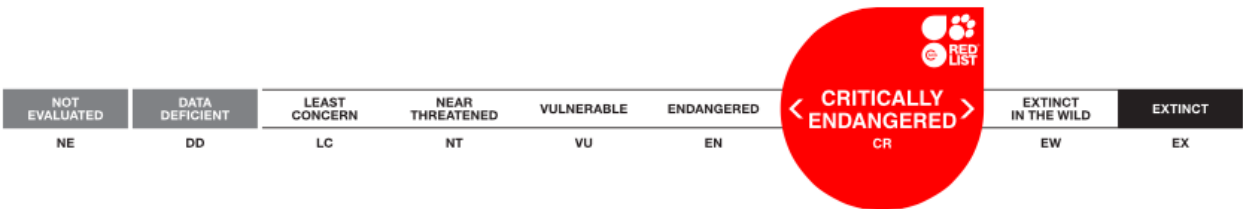
Food Habits

The Three-striped Roofed Turtle is primarily a herbivorous species, feeding on aquatic vegetation such as water hyacinth, water lilies, and other floating plants. They also eat some insects and small fish, but their diet mainly consists of plant material.

Breeding

The breeding season of the Three-striped Roofed Turtle usually starts from February to April. During this time, the male turtles will fight for the right to mate with the female turtles. The female turtle will lay her eggs in a hole dug in the sand or soil near the water's edge. The clutch size can range from 8 to 25 eggs, and the incubation period is around 75-80 days. After hatching, the hatchlings will make their way to the water.

Conservation Status



The Three-striped Roofed Turtle is an endangered species, primarily due to habitat destruction, hunting for their meat and eggs, and the pet trade. The species has been listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) since 1975, which prohibits their international trade. In India, the species is

protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and hunting or trade of the species is strictly prohibited.

Conservation efforts have been taken to protect the Three-striped Roofed Turtle, such as captive breeding programs, habitat restoration, and awareness campaigns. The Wildlife Institute of India has initiated a conservation program for the species, which involves habitat protection and monitoring of the population.

Places to see the Three-striped Roofed Turtle in India

The Three-striped Roofed Turtle is a rare species and can be challenging to spot in the wild. However, there are some places in India where they can be seen, such as the Chambal River in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the Mahanadi River in Odisha, and the Brahmaputra River in Assam. The best time to see them is during the breeding season, which is from February to April.