



Northern River Terrapin or Four toed Terrapin (*Batagur baska*)

- Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Red List
- Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, India.
- Included on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), making international trade in this species illegal

HABITAT

This terrapin is found in tidal areas of large rivers, sandbars and riverbanks.

RANGE

The terrapin is native to India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia. It is regionally extinct in Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. Sunderbans is a good habitat range for this species.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

- Head-Body Length – 60 cm,
- Males have longer and thicker tails than females.
- The snout is upturned.
- Carapace or shell is black or gray. Females and juveniles are olive grey in colour.
- Males usually have white eyes. Females – grey to brown eyes.
- **Species recognition feature – 4 claws in front feet. Other turtles have 5.**

FAST FACTS

- Asia's largest freshwater turtle.
- The terrapins nest from Dec-March and can lay from 13-30 eggs.
- When the female has laid her clutch of eggs she covers the nest with sand and then rises and falls on the surface to compact the sand, the resultant rhythmic 'tun tonk' sound has led to the species' Malay name of 'tuntong'.
- They can migrate 50-60 miles during breeding season to reach their sandbanks nesting sites.
- The terrapin is known to nest at the same place during the

	<p>same time each year. It is believed that this is the main reason that has led to people capturing the females and leading to the species population decline.</p>
POPULATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exact numbers are not known but almost all batagur species of terrapins remain in limited numbers in tiny fragmented habitats.
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over collection of adults and eggs from nesting sites. • Illegal poaching for meat and eggs.
<p>Image courtesy - http://sundarbantigerreserve.org/images/baska.jpg</p>	

Reference

<http://www.arkive.org/batagur/batagur-baska/>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/2614/0>

<http://www.turtlesurvival.org/component/taxonomy/term/summary/36/37#.WlcQ01V97IU>

http://www.asianturtlenetwork.org/field_guide/Batagur_baska.htm