



tortoises and turtles

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**STATUS OF RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION ON FRESHWATER TURTLES AND LAND
TORTOISES IN INDIA**

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The Indian region has an extremely diverse tortoise and freshwater turtle fauna, with 26 species occurring in India alone, most being endemic to the region and poorly known. After a lull of over half a century (following the work of M. A. Smith, published in 1931), research and conservation of these groups have picked up, and there are now several biologists working on turtles and tortoises all over the country.

Governmental agencies involved in these studies include the Wildlife Institute of India and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, which is funding long-term studies on the ecological relationships between the various freshwater turtle species in the infamous Chambal River, conducted by R. J. Rao and D. Basu, in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Basu is associated with the Gharial Center at Kukrail, U. P., which has started an ambitious program of rehabilitating several species of corpse-eating turtles, to help control pollution caused by dumping tonnes