

# Behler Turtle Conservation Award

September 3, 2021

**In news-** Indian biologist **Shailendra Singh** has been awarded the Behler Turtle Conservation Award. He has immensely contributed to bringing **three critically endangered turtle conservation species – Red-crowned Roofed Turtle, Northern River Terrapin and Black Softshell Turtle**, back from the brink of extinction.

## **Key updates-**

- Shailendra Singh was named to lead the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA)/ Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) India turtle programme.
- There are 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises in India.
- These critically endangered turtles are being conserved as a part of TSA India's research, conservation breeding and education programme in different parts of the country.
- The Northern River Terrapin (*Batagur baska*) is being conserved at the Sunderbans; the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle (*Batagur kachuga*) at Chambal; and the Black Softshell Turtle (*Nilssonina nigricans*) at different temples in Assam.

## **About the award-**

- John L. Behler was an American naturalist, herpetologist, author, and activist known for his work in conserving endangered species of turtles, snakes, and other reptiles.
- The Behler Turtle Conservation Award was **established in 2006** to recognise outstanding achievements, contributions and leadership excellence in international

turtle conservation and biology.

- The award is co-presented by the ***Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG), the Turtle Conservancy (TC), and the Turtle Conservation Fund (TCF).***
- The award was **established by Anders Rhodin and Rick Hudson**, with the TSA and TFTSG as co-presenters from 2006 to 2013, and joined in 2014 by the TC and TCF as co-presenters.
- Currently, the award carries an **honorarium of \$5000**, with the awardee determined through a broad-based nomination and selection process.
- It is widely considered the “Nobel Prize” of turtle conservation and biology.