Turtle – Threats

- In an attempt to raise awareness on conservation of tortoise and turtles, and on illegal trafficking, **May 23 is celebrated as World Turtle Day**.
- In addition to smuggling, turtles face a variety of man-made issues that threaten their existence. One major threat, as with all other animal species, is habitat destruction.
- As rivers become more and more polluted, **the turtles are beginning to die off at greater rates**. The hatchlings are born deformed; adults are dying from eating plastic; and the food sources are disappearing.
- Large fishing trawlers also sometimes catch sea turtles, cut off their flippers to get them out of the net, and then leave them to die.
- One of the greatest threats facing turtles and tortoises in India is **smuggling to East Asian and Southeast Asian markets**.
- **West Bengal has become a focal point** of the turtle smuggling trade as many of the turtles make their way to Kolkata before being shipped off.