

'IMPRESSIVE' TORTOISE DISCOVERED IN ARUNACHAL

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The newly found 'Impressed' Tortoise.special arrangement

A tortoise considered beautiful enough to be named 'impressed' has been discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.

A team of herpetologists from the Forest Department and two NGOs — Help Earth and Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) — found the Impressed Tortoise (*Manouria impressa*) in Yazali area of the Lower Subansiri district a few days ago.

This is the first record of the tortoise in India, taking the count to five and the non-marine chelonian count to 29. Chelonian is an order of reptile that includes turtles, terrapins and tortoises.

"There are only two species of tortoises under the *Manouria* genus. India was known to be the home of only the Asian Forest Tortoise (*Manouria emys*) until the discovery of the Impressed Tortoise," Guwahati-based Jayaditya Purkayastha of Help Earth told *The Hindu* .

The Asian Forest Tortoise, the largest in mainland Asia, is found only in the northeast, as are 20 of the other 28 species of chelonians.

"The male Impressed Tortoise is smaller than the female which is 30 cm in length. This *Manouria* species is one-third the size of the Asian Forest Tortoise," Dr. Purkayastha said.

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