



Asian Turtle News

News from the Frontlines of Conservation

The Asian Turtle Conservation Network (ATCN)

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First success of head starting Asian Giant Softshell Turtles (*Pelochelys cantorii*) in Cambodia.

After surveys along the Mekong River in Cambodia in 2007 by the Cambodian Turtle Conservation Project and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) possible nesting locations for one of Asia's largest freshwater turtle species were identified. In early 2008 a project was initiated in Kratie Province close to the boarder of Stoeng Treng Province to protect nesting sites through community involvement, local fishermen were hired to protect the nests from turtles observed nesting in January and February. Three nests containing 117 eggs were successfully located and protected. After around two months, 91 hatchlings had emerged and were released back into the Mekong River from their nesting beach.

It is hoped that in the coming years additional nests can be protected by the community teams to give the eggs and hatchlings a fighting chance during this crucial and vulnerable stage in their life cycle. Activities will also be undertaken in fishing communities along the river to raise awareness to the species and the need for its protection as it is still not uncommon for large adults to be caught by fishermen in the Mekong.

This project was co-funded by the Cambodian Turtle Conservation Project and conservation International (CI) and conducted in collaboration with the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia and the World Wide Fund for Nature - Cambodia.



Some of the 91 hatchlings before they were released back into the Mekong River.



A hatchling Asian Giant Softshell Turtle takes an easy snack before being released.



Hatchling Asian Giant Softshell Turtle taking their first swim in the Mekong River.

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