

The Asian Turtle Crisis *Bulletin*

News from around the Region

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The Asian Turtle Crisis Bulletin includes a brief summary of activities involving turtle conservation and research in the region that have been reported over the previous month through the Asian Turtle Conservation Network (ATCN). This bulletin is produced periodically by the ATCN and distributed electronically to individuals with interest in the Asian turtle crisis.

Cambodia

Cardamom Mountain Conservation Project

A ten-day turtle survey in the Areng Valley by students from Phnom Penh National University (BP Conservation Award winners) and David Emmett of Conservation International turned up the first verified record for *Manouria impressa* in Cambodia, along with a first record for the Cardamom Mountains for *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*. The usual assortment of *Cyclemys*, *Indotestudo elongata*, and *Heosemys grandis* also surfaced during the field survey, which involved trapping in the Areng River and timed transect surveys in evergreen forest and marshland.

The *Manouria impressa* was recovered from a local village in the Areng Valley, and had reportedly been found by a dog during an excursion by villagers into the mountains. One of the *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* was found on land adjacent a river, and the second in a grassy marsh.

See full survey report

<http://www.asianturtlenetwork.org/shared/documents/4tortoisereserchmethodspdf.pdf>

Indonesia

Jakarta Market Survey: Surveys in Jakarta pet markets in August documented nearly 2,300 turtles of 44 species. Half of the turtles were Indonesian native species, while the other half comprised of exotics including rare tortoises from Madagascar.

Laos

Phouthone Kingsada returned from a three week field training course with Conservation International's Cardamom Mountain Conservation Project in Cambodia. Phouthone is interested in working with *Manouria impressa* in Laos, and attended the Cardamom training in order to strengthen his field survey skills. The training was jointly supported by the WCS-Cleveland Zoo Asian Turtle Conservation program and Conservation International, Cambodia.

Myanmar

Yadanabon Zoo Receives Another Burmese Roofed Turtle

In late August, an adult male Burmese roofed turtle (*Kachuga trivittata*) was turned into the Yadanabon Zoo by Mandalay University researcher, Thin Thin Khaing. The turtle was caught by a local fisherman in the vicinity of Lay Pin Village on the upper Dokhtawady River. The Yadanabon Zoo now maintains a group of seven living examples of this critically endangered turtle. Plans are to initiate a captive breeding program for the species at the zoo, and Gerald Kuchling will arrive in late November to help plan for expansion of the holding and breeding facilities at the zoo with support provided by grants from the TCF and TSA.

Vietnam

***Rafetus swinhoei* Survey Reveals a New Probable Site**

A third round of surveys was carried out in September focused on wetlands and lakes in Thanh Hoa, Yen Bai, and Phu Tho Provinces as part of efforts to identify sites where *Rafetus swinhoei* may remain in the wild. Peter Pritchard and members of the Vietnam Turtle Conservation Program team that includes WCS research coordinator Tim McCormack and Bui Dang Phong of Cuc Phuong National Park, investigated several new sites in three provinces. The most promising find was a lake in Yen Bai where locals believe the turtles can still be found. The Vietnam *Rafetus* Project team will focus follow up surveys on the Yen Bai site and another probable site discovered in February 2004 in Thanh Hoa Province.

The surveys were jointly supported by the Melbourne Zoo and Chelonian Research Institute (CRI). The TCF has provided a follow-up grant that will enable a national field biologist to be trained and work at both sites to verify if wild populations of *Rafetus* remain at either location before conservation measures are put in place and focus on protection.

***Pyxidea mouhotii* Radio Telemetry Study Update, Cuc Phuong National Park**

Tim McCormack (WCS Vietnam Program Turtle Research Coordinator) and his field team presently have 12 *Pyxidea mouhotii* fitted with transmitters in the study area. All but two of the turtles are of local origin. During September, one of the turtles was lost (leaving 12 in the study), possibly stolen by a tourist of the park.

The study has been underway since June of 2003 and is supported the Humane Society International and a Rufford Grant.

TCC Park Coordinator Attends Second Round of Training in the US

Bui Dang Phong of the Cuc Phuong Turtle Conservation Center (TCC) headed off for a second month-long training course in the US focused on captive management and veterinary care of turtles. Phong is training with WCS at the Bronx Zoo and at their St. Catherine's Island facility in Georgia.

New Basking Tanks at the TCC

Hatchling basking tanks were completed with support from WVF Japan. The basking tanks consist of four small concrete enclosures with locking screen covers for *Indotestudo elongata* and *Heosemys grandis* hatchlings. The tanks were recommended by WCS veterinarian Bonnie Raphael during a recent training visit in order to provide scheduled periods of natural light for some of the TCC's many hatchlings, that are otherwise raised in a research building.

TCC Breeding Success This Year Yields *Cuora galbinifrons*

With the hatching season nearly complete, in 2004 the TCC has successfully produced hatchlings of species at the center. Planned efforts focused on *Cuora galbinifrons*, *Mauremys annamensis*, *Sacalia quadriocellata*, *Pyxidea mouhotii*, and *Sacalia quadriocellata*. The hatching of nine *Cuora galbinifrons* was the most notable success for 2004. This species has traditionally been difficult to breed at the center. Thanks to support provided by the Dutch Tortoise Society and input provided by Henk Zwartepoorte of the Rotterdam Zoo on incubation technique, as well as a new in situ nest box designed by Tim McCormack, the TCC has had its most successful hatching year at the center.

Of noted interest were opportunistic hatchings of *Ocadia sinensis* and *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*, the first at the TCC for each of these species.

Figures for the year include:

Species	Hatchlings	Notes
<i>Cuora galbinifrons</i>	9	
<i>Sacalia quadriocellata</i>	1	Only one clutch of two eggs discovered this year
<i>Indotestudo elongata</i>	30	
<i>Pyxidea mouhotii</i>	2	Hatching pending
<i>Mauremys annamensis</i>	8	Hatching pending
<i>Cyclemys pulchristriata</i>	17	Hatching pending
<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>	26	
<i>Heosemys grandis</i>	82	
<i>Ocadia sinensis</i>	11	
<i>Siebenrockiella crassicollis</i>	1	
<i>Total</i>		

Trade Seizures Reported

Nghe An Province, Vietnam: Police stopped a bus on its way to Vinh City carrying wildlife including 277kg of turtles, representing nine species. The police suspect that the turtles came across the border from Laos, though based upon the species composition, it is probable that the shipment originated further south. The turtles, were turned over to Nghe An provincial authorities, and are currently awaiting disposition.

Species composition

Cuora amboinensis 4.4kg
Cyclemys sp. 44kg
Heosemys grandis 24kg
Hieremys annandalii 97kg
Malayemys subtrijuga 21.6kg
Pyxidea mouhotii 4kg
Siebenrockiella crassicollis 21kg
Indotestudo elongata 38kg
Manouria impressa 15kg

Cuc Phuong Forest Rangers Bust Hunter with Turtles, Vietnam: Forest rangers arrested two hunters after they were discovered in the forest with a bag of 11 *Pyxidea mouhotii*. The turtles had been collected beneath fruiting trees over a period of two days. Two of the turtles were fitted with transmitters and released as part of the radio telemetry home range and ecology study underway at Cuc Phuong. Three other juveniles will be released in October, while the remaining six adults will be maintained as breeding stock by the Turtle Conservation Center, as these represent turtles of known origin.

Trade Seizure on Sulawesi, Indonesia: Twenty one Jakarta-bound *Leucocephalon yuwonoi* were reportedly confiscated from a trader in Sulawesi September 11. The turtles were turned over to the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Center in North Sulawesi.

The Asian Turtle Conservation Network

For reports and other news-worthy notes of interest, visit the ATCN website at www.asianturtlenetwork.org

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