



Asian Turtle Program & Turtle Conservation Centre

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From this picture, ATP, ENV and TCC staff was able to identify critically endangered species in the shipment.
Photo: www.nguoiduatin.vn

Confiscated turtles from Ha Tinh province transferred to the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC)

On the 17th of October 2012, police and local Forest Protection Department (FPD) officers from Huong Son district (Ha Tinh province) pulled over a man who was transporting 50kg of turtles on his motorbike, driving on highway 8A through Son Bang commune heading for Vinh city (Nghe An province). The turtles were found in a big bag and were wrapped with adhesive tape. The shipment included Elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*), Impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*), Asian Leaf turtles (*Cyclemys oldhamii*) as well as one critically endangered Indochinese Box turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*), one critically endangered Bourret's box turtle (*Cuora bourreti*) and two endangered Keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*). The case was reported to Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) and to the staff of the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) in Cuc Phuong National Park (Ninh Binh province) as soon as the news spread on the Internet on the 18th of October.

When TCC managers Mr. Bui Dang Phong and Mr. Hoang Van Thai heard that the Ha Tinh FPD was still holding the confiscated turtles, they realized how crucial it would be to rescue some of the rare animals as quickly as possible. On the 20th of October they both went on the 6h trip to Ha Tinh province to receive one rare *Cuora galbinifrons* and two *Cuora mouhotii* from the FPD there. Unfortunately they arrived too late for the *Cuora bourreti* which had died while being in FPD custody. Back at the TCC, Mr. Thai examined the animals and while both *Cuora mouhotii* were healthy and strong, the *Cuora galbinifrons* had a badly injured leg, most likely from the trap it was caught in. As of now, all animals are recovering in the quarantine station of the TCC but after 3 months of quarantine the animals will join the TCC population until suitable release sites for them are found.

Apart from rescuing the animals the trip to Ha Tinh, sponsored by ENV, was also a good opportunity for the TCC to strengthen its relationship with the FPD officers as many turtles are shipped through Ha Tinh province. The TCC is hoping to receive more endangered and critically endangered species from this province in the future

Press release by Nguyen Thi Xuan Huong
24th October 2012

We would like to thank ENV for making this rescue operation possible. Many thanks also go to the Ha Tinh FPD for transferring the animals to the TCC. The TCC would also like to thank the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) and the Intrepid Foundation for supporting the centre and its conservation projects in 2012.



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After a 12h trip, Mr. Hoang Van Thai is tired but happy about the rescue operation, and ready to examine the turtles' health. Photo credit: ATP



Ha Tinh FPD at the site of the confiscation, weighing and identifying the turtles.
Photo: www.nguoiduatin.vn