



Asian Turtle Program & Turtle Conservation Centre

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Yellow-headed temple turtles hatch at the Turtle Conservation Centre in Cuc Phuong National Park, Vietnam

After several years of hiatus the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) of Cuc Phuong National Park has hatched five endangered (IUCN Red List, 2011) yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*) this month.

In December 2012, while feeding these long term captive adult turtles, a keeper surprisingly discovered a newly laid nest with a clutch of six eggs. Despite being at the TCC in a deep pool of a semi-wild enclosure for 8 years this was the first clutch of eggs for *Heosemys annandalii* at the centre.

Along with other winter nesters such as the Elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*) the eggs were incubated at 26°C-28°C in the incubation room. Hatching after approximately 100 days of incubation the hatchlings will be raised at the TCC and either join the captive population or be released in suitable habitat within their natural range in Southern Vietnam.

This semi-aquatic species is the largest freshwater turtle species that the TCC holds. All adult animals were transferred to the TCC when they were confiscated from the illegal trade. Like many turtles the yellow-headed temple turtle is endangered because of human exploitation. This species is not only taken from the wild for its meat and eggs, used in traditional medicine.

Most recently *Heosemys annandalii* was on the agenda of this year's CITES meeting in Bangkok. Currently the species is listed under Appendix II, which includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. During the CITES meeting it was decided to add an annotation to the Appendix II listing of *Heosemys annandalii* which set a zero export quota on wild specimens for commercial purposes.

Press release by Sarah Wahl
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We would like to thank the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) and Intrepid for their support of the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) assurance population.



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Above: One of five yellow-headed temple turtles (*Heosemys annandalii*) that hatched in March/April 2013 at the TCC.
Photo by: Sarah Wahl