



Asian Turtle Program & Turtle Conservation Centre

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A group of Keeled Box Turtles settle in a new quarantine enclosure at the Turtle Conservation Centre.
Photo by: Nguyen Thu Thuy - ATP

Rescue of critical tortoise and freshwater turtles in Vietnam

As the year came to a close it was clear that 2015 had been a very significant year for the rescue of tortoise and freshwater turtles in Vietnam and 2016 started with a jump also. Just before the celebrations for the lunar New Year commenced, on the 3rd of February 2016, a large shipment of rare tortoise and freshwater turtles was sent from Ha Noi wildlife rescue centre, on the outskirts of Hanoi (Soc Son district), Vietnam, to the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) of Cuc Phuong National Park. This follows a similar transfer made on 30 September 2015 of 101 animals that had been confiscated in Hanoi on 20 September 2015.

This new shipment of 89 tortoise and freshwater turtles included 4 Malayan Box Turtles (*Cuora amboinensis*), 18 Indochinese Box Turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*), 08 Bourret's Box Turtles (*Cuora bourreti*), 18 Keeled Box Turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*), 17 Southeast Asian Leaf Turtles (*Cyclemys oldhamii*), 1 Eastern

Black Bridged Leaf Turtle (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*), 2 Orange Headed Temple Turtles (*Heosemys grandis*), 13 Elongated Tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*) and 8 Chinese Stripe-necked Turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*). Hoang Van Ha of the Asian Turtle Program said "These animals are all so important for conservation. A monitored release of some of these animals would be useful for providing information on the survival of these species after they have been in the trade. While some could also be kept in captivity for breeding to allow release of hatchlings in the future." The Box Turtles in particular are becoming increasingly threatened in Vietnam where all 25 native species of tortoise and freshwater turtle have been heavily impacted by illegal hunting and trade along with habitat loss. Over 50% of native species are now considered endangered or critically endangered on the IUCN red lists that indicate they are at risk of future extinction.

Some animals transferred to Cuc Phuong National Park were from a new seizure including three Indo-chinese box turtle, one Keeled box turtle, one Elongated tortoise, one Orange Headed Temple Turtles, one Malayan Box Turtles, and one Eastern Black Bridged Leaf Turtle. Others are from a confiscation made in Hanoi during September 2015, which Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Centre had been caring for with the support of the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) and Four Paws Vietnam. With a number of recent confiscations made in and around Hanoi, the Ha Noi wildlife Rescue Centre located in Soc Son district, Hanoi city and only 30km from Hanoi has built new enclosures in which to receive and for short term care of tortoise and freshwater turtles.

In 2015, the Turtle Conservation Centre received 185 turtles in 08 confiscations and from individual animals handed in from the pet trade. This had been one of the busiest years for rescues at the centre in the past decade. These numbers do not necessarily reflect an increase in animals being traded in Vietnam, but rather the improvement in confiscation and placement mechanisms in the country to deal with the wildlife trade.

A primary role of the Turtle Conservation Centre is the receiving of confiscated animals for rehabilitation and integration into captive assurance populations or for release back into the wild. With so many animals coming in it is hoped that in 2016 some turtles can be released back into the wild where they ultimately belong.

Press release by: Hao Do Thanh – TCC of CPNP & Timothy McCormack – ATP/IMC
Date: 16th February 2016

We would like to thank all those that have supported the Turtle Conservation Centre and Asian Turtle Program work during 2015. We would also like to commend the great work by Ha Noi Wildlife Rescue Centre and Hanoi authorities in confiscating and placing these critical animals.

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One of the Keeled Box Turtles being transferred, this species is native to Cuc Phuong National Park and there is the possibility of release of some of these animals in the future.

Photo by: Pham Van Thong- ATP



The turtles being prepared at Soc Son Rescue Centre for the journey to the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) in Cuc Phuong National Park. Photo by: Pham Van Thong- ATP

