



Asian Turtle Program & Turtle Conservation Centre

Protecting today so we can see tomorrow...



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The endangered Malaysian Giant Turtle (*Orlitia borneensis*) being kept in a local house near Hanoi. It is possible that the turtle has been released from the pet trade or escape from somewhere.
Photo by: Do Thanh Hao – TCC.

Do Thanh Hao - Turtle Conservation Centre ©

An unusual wildlife rescue - A Malaysian Giant Turtle has been rescued in Vietnam

On the 25th of January 2018, an unusual rescue has taken place in Ba Vi District, Hanoi, Vietnam. A very large, 23kg, Malaysian Giant Turtle (*Orlitia borneensis*) was rescued by Ba Vi Forest Protection Department (FPD) and transported to the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) in Cuc Phuong National Park.

A large turtle had been reported by local fishermen to the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) in December 2017, the lake is of interest for conservation as it historically was the home of Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*) better known in Vietnam as the Hoan Kiem Turtle from individuals of this species that inhabited Hanoi's Hoan Kiem Lake. Although it is possible that the species still survives in the lake it was heavily hunted in the 1980's and 1990's with very few reports since.

On the 23rd January 2018, the Malaysian Giant Turtle was caught while resting on land, and is possible the animal that had been seen in Suoi Hai Lake in the past year. The Malaysian Giant Turtle is not native to Vietnam, with the endangered (IUCN 2017) species occurring in Indonesia, Malaysia or Borneo, it is pos-

sible it has been released from the pet trade or escape from somewhere. Interesting the species has been listed on appendix II of CITES since 2003, with no reported imports or exports for Vietnam, so how did this animal arrive in Vietnam?

The turtle was successfully transferred to the TCC on 25th January 2018 and is now being cared for by rescue centre staff and the Asian Turtle Program. Support is now needed to develop holding for this very large animal to provide adequate space and heating while a long-term solution for this animal, either returning it home or placing it with a conservation breeding program for the species.

You can support our work and rescues such as this by visiting our support page at http://asianturtleprogram.org/pages/support_atp.html

Press release by: Do Thanh Hao (Turtle Conservation Centre, Cuc Phuong National Park) & Timothy McCormack (Asian Turtle Program /Indo Myanmar Conservation)

Date: 28th January 2018

We would like to thank Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) for coordinating the rescue, Ba Vi District, Hanoi Forest Protection Department (FPD) and Police and Cuc Phuong National Park for their continued support of conservation.

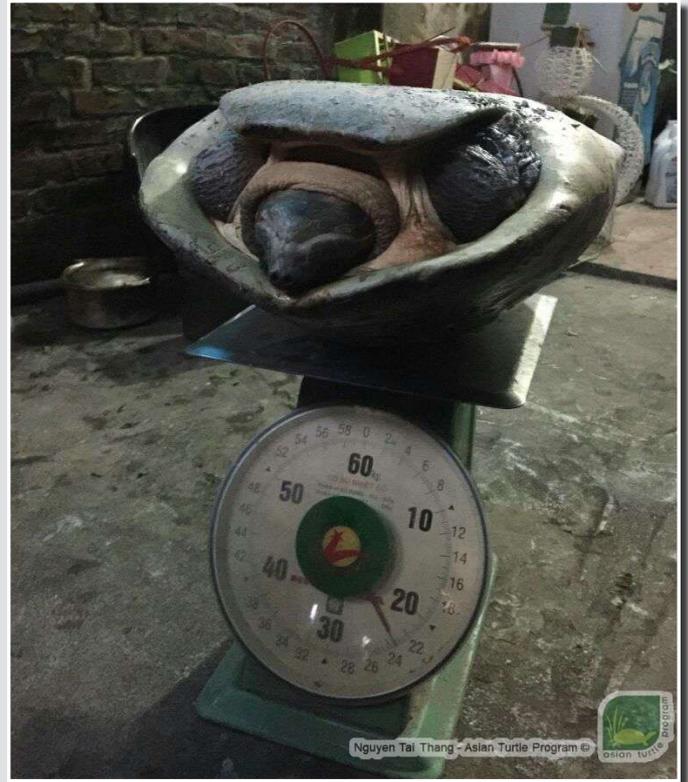


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At 23.5kg when this turtle was first observed and reported to the ATP we initially wondered if the animal was Swinhoe's softshell turtle (*Rafetus swinhoi*), the world's rarest turtle, as the species historically occurred and might still survive in Suoi Hai Lake where the animal was caught.
Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang – ATP/IMC.



The rescue team arrived at the local household at dusk and quickly transported the endangered turtle to the TCC in Cuc Phuong National Park. Photo by: Do Thanh Hao – TCC. At 23.5kg when this turtle was first observed and reported to the ATP we initially wondered if the animal was Swinhoe's softshell turtle (*Rafetus swinhoi*), the world's rarest turtle, as the species historically occurred and might still survive in Suoi Hai Lake where the animal was caught. Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang – ATP/IMC.