



## Asian Turtle Program Indo - Myanmar Conservation



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Rangers and Environmental Police from Phu Yen province participating in the training course.  
Photo by: Timothy McCormack - ATP

## Reptile enforcement training in central Vietnam focuses on a globally important province for tortoise and freshwater turtle conservation.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 a special enforcement training course was held in Phu Yen province of central Vietnam for 20 wildlife protection agency staff, including Forest Protection Department (FPD), Fisheries and Environmental Police. The two-day course on 'Law enforcement training to strengthen protection of rare and endangered reptiles in Vietnam' was designed to focus on priorities tortoise and freshwater turtle species occurring within the province, as well as identifying priority sites for the conservation of turtles in the province. The training was organized by the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) and the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) of Cuc Phuong National Park.

The first day was lecture based covering threats, species identification and laws. On the second day of training a visit was made to Deo Ca Hon Nua Special Use Forest, this is one of the only sites in Vietnam where the critically endangered Southern Vietnamese Box Turtle (*Cuora picturata*) has been found to occur in the wild. The species is extremely range restricted only occurring within two provinces (Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen provinces) in south central Vietnam. During the visit to Deo Ca the head of the areas FPD station, Mr. La Ngoc Tinh, gave an introduction to the area. The group also visited a number of potential wetlands where the critically endangered and endemic Vietnamese Pond Turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) likely historically occurred. Discussions were also held on future conservation potential for this species in the province.

The importance of the province was highlighted by a confiscation on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July of 16 turtles in Dong Hoa district, Phu Yen province. The bust included *Cuora picturata*, *Indotestudo enlogata*, *Manouria impressa*, *Sacalia quadriocellata*, *Cyclemys* sp. which are a priority. Animals were reportedly released back into Deo ca forest

Following the training law enforcement officials in the province will be better equipped with the information they need to ensure greater focus and protection of threatened tortoise and freshwater turtles in this important province.

Press release by: Timothy McCormack – ATP/IMC  
Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015

We would like to thank Rotterdam Zoo, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (CMZ), IUCN and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for supporting this activity. We would also like to thank Rangers and Environmental Police from Phu Yen province for their enthusiasm and commitment during the training.



Visits were made with FPD to a number of possible Vietnamese Pond Turtle sites in the province.  
Photo by: Timothy McCormack - ATP



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As part of the training the team visited Deo Ca Hon Nhua Special use forest, the only current protected habitat in which the endemic Southern Vietnamese Box Turtle occurs.  
Photo by: Do Thanh Hao – TCC

Photo below: Deo Ca forest is famous for its rock formation, not unlike an Easter Island Head.

Photo by: Nguyen Thanh Luan - ATP



Photo above: A *Cuora picturata* seen in the wild in Deo Ca forest.

Photo by: Torsten Blanck



Photo above: The Vietnamese Pond Turtle (*Mauremys anamensis*) is a species that does well in captivity but lacks suitable habitat in which to re-establish wild populations.

Photo by: Katie Morgan



Photo above: Some ponds and wetlands very close to Deo Ca Forest would be suitable for Vietnamese Pond Turtle re-introduction if they could be included in the protected area.

Photo by: Timothy McCormack - ATP