



Asian Turtle Program Indo - Myanmar Conservation



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A group photograph of the Thanh Hao province Forest Protection, Environmental Police and Border Guards with ATP and TCC staff. Photo by: Pham Van Thong - ATP/IMC

Reptile enforcement training in Thanh Hoa province, northern Vietnam focuses on the world rarest turtle

From the 16th to 17th of December 2015, a special enforcement-training course was held in Thanh Hoa province, northern Vietnam, for 25 wildlife protection agency staffs, including Forest Protection Department (FPD), Environmental Police and Border Guards. 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. In addition a special presentation focused on the worlds rarest turtles, the

Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*) and findings of interview surveys along the Ma and Chu river in the province from 2010-2011. Other priorities highlighted for the province were the critically endangered Indochinese box turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*) and endangered big-headed turtle (*Platysternon megacephalum*) and Keeled Box Turtle (*Cuora mouhotii*). On the second day of training, a visit was made to Thong Nhat town, Yen Dinh District where a complex wetland area with potential for *Rafetus swinhoei* and two endangered aquatic turtle species, the Chinese Stripe-necked Turtle (*Mauremys sinensis*) and the Yellow Pond Turtle (*Mauremys mutica*). During the visit to the complex wetland area, Pham Van Thong of the ATP gave an introduction to the area highlighting the threats facing the wetland, with agricultural conversion currently happening at an alarming rate.

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: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC
Date: 18th December 2015

We would like to thank the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the IUCN for support this training and Thanh Hoa provincial Forest Protection Department, Environmental Police and Border Guards for their enthusiastic participation.



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Day 1 Law documents on wildlife protection reviewed and discussed (exercises)

Photo by: Nguyen Tai thang - ATP/IMC



Day 1: Pham Van Thong the *Rafetus* officer makes a presentation on interview survey findings from the province in 2010-2011 Photo by: Hoang Van Ha - ATP/IMC

Day 2: Training on identification of tortoise and freshwater turtles for enforcement purposes.
Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP/IMC



Day 2: Visit to historical *Rafetus* site where the species could still survive in Thanh Hoa Province. Photo by: Hoang Van Ha - ATP/IMC