



Asian Turtle Program Indo - Myanmar Conservation



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Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP

The players competed
hard to become the new turtle cup champion

Fifth football match organized to support conservation of the worlds rarest turtle

From 25th February to 3rd March 2015, the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) in collaboration with Kim Son commune Youth Union organized the fifth football event to promote the world rarest turtle, the Hoan Kiem turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*). Only four individuals of the species are known in existence in the world, of those, two individual are living in Suzhou zoo, China; two are living in Vietnam with one known as the “Cụ Rùa” (Grandfather Turtle) in Hanoi’s Hoan Kiem lake and one in Dong Mo lake, Son Tay district, Hanoi, Vietnam.

The turtle which live in Dong Mo Lake was rescued and released after its escape and capture by locals downstream from its lake home in flood 2008. The ATP has undertaken awareness and local community activities since 2007 to promote protection of the turtle in Dong Mo lake. These have included the annually football event, boat races, radio announcements, posters, signboards, art competitions. In addition the last 3 months has also seen the creation of a no fishing zone to recover the fish stock and reduce fishing activities in the favorite location of turtle as well as the construction of a sand bank to provide the turtle with a suitable nesting location or

basking site. A permanent team is maintained at the lake for monitoring and observations and to support community activities.

The annual ‘Turtle Cup’ football match has now been held for 6 consecutive years. 2015 was the first year where private sponsorship for teams was made possible to support some costs of running this event, we would like to thank Mr Chris Banks from Zoos Victoria, Australia for sponsoring his private team (Kim Dai II) and Vietcraft Ltd (Dong Mo Fisherman Team).



“Con Giai” - *Rafetus swinhoei* which was rescued and released to Dong Mo lake in 2008 after escaping and being caught. Photo by: Tim McCormack - ATP

The football match this year involved 8 local teams come from villages around Dong Mo lake. These are Nghia Son, Kim Dai I, Kim Dai II, Kim Chung, Kim Tan, Nha Tho, Long Ho and the Dong Mo Fisherman team. After having a week of excited competition, the final match was between Kim Tan village and Dong Mo Fisherman team. This match was called by local people “Cuộc Chiến của thần Núi-Sơn Tinh và thần Nước-Thủy Tinh”, “The battle between the of Mountain God-Son Tinh and Water God-Thuy Tinh”. A tough first half left the team drawing 0:0, but as game play exploded in the second half with some players tiring the final result was 2:1 to the victorious Son Tinh - God of mountain team (Kim Tan Village). Over 600 spectators watch the final match in this exciting event which has grown in popularity each years. With the Kim Tan team emerging as new champions of 2015.

“It has been an amazing football match. I loved it. It not only give the chance for players to show off their strength but also it give the local people the time to relax after hard days working. We also highly appreciate the information you gave about “Con Giai” (local name of *Rafetus swinhoei* in Dong Mo) in Dong Mo lake. We are so proud that we have a sacred turtle here. Follow my fishing experience, I strongly believe that at least 3 animal different in size in this lake.” Nguyen Van Hai - a fisherman from Dong Mo and spectator.

*: This relates to one legend of Vietnam about the war between two God: Son Tinh - Mountain God and Thuy Tinh- Water God to marry the princess Mi Nuong of Hung XVIII King. Son Tinh has defeated the Thuy Tinh to get married with Mi Nuong. It made Thuy Tinh so angry, every year Thuy Tinh raise the water through rain, and storm to fight Son Tinh to steel Mi Nuong.

Press released by: Pham Van Thong & Timothy McCormack - ATP
Date: 12th March 2015

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The players competed hard to become the new turtle cup champion. Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP



Over 600 spectators came to support their teams. Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP



The new champion of “Turtle football cup” 2015- Kim Tan team. Photo by: Pham Van Thong - ATP