



Asian Turtle Program Indo - Myanmar Conservation



Indo-Myanmar
Conservation

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The home of the Hoan Kiem turtle under threat from intensive fishing

From the 21st of June to the 3rd of July 2018, the peacefulness of Dong Mo lake, Hanoi, Vietnam, and home to the worlds rarest turtle, was broken by intensive and continuous fishing activity. The lake is home to Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*), better known in Vietnam as the Hoan Kiem turtle. A team of 12 fishermen used a 1.5km long series of nets to drive fish into a net trap 40m long, 40m wide and 20m deep. Driving the fish five times they were able to catch over 30 tonnes of fish.

Although the fishing net was placed outside the no-fishing zone area established for the turtle, loud noises were made by banging the metal boats to drive the fish into the nets which could also disturb the turtle. During the fishing, staff from the ATP/IMC were present on the lake 24/7 to monitor the activities. Luckily the turtle was not entangled in the net although it was twice observed inside the fishing area. Following the completion of the fishing activities the turtle has been seen by staff and appears safe and well.

The lake owner and local authorities have all been supportive throughout this activity and fishermen were not targeting the turtle. But protecting this site and working at other locations for the species is extremely time consuming for the ATP/IMC team, we urgently need to recruit additional staff and expand our activities.

Press release: The Asian Turtle Program Team
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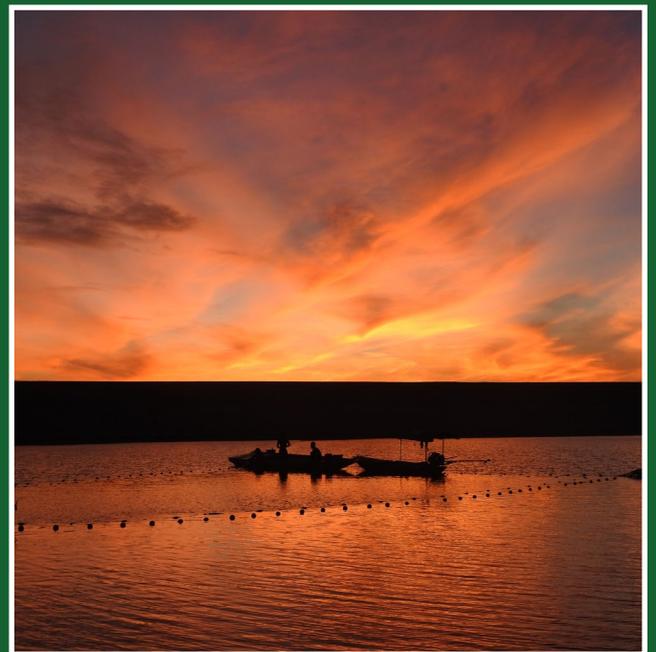
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Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP/IMC



Beautiful sunset at Dong Mo lake during fishing days.

Photo by: Nguyen Tai Thang - ATP/IMC