



Asian Turtle Program Indo-Myanmar Conservation



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Making Preparations For Recovering The World's Rarest Turtle Species In Vietnam

Hanoi, 13th May 2019: Nearly 30 representatives participated in the first consultancy workshop on “Methods of capture, identification, sexing, and transmitter placement for the Hoan Kiem Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*) in Xuan Khanh Lake” hosted by the Hanoi Fishery Department (HFD) of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in collaboration with the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Vietnam.

This workshop, which was organised to further efforts to conserve the critically endangered Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*), commonly known in Vietnam as the Hoan Kiem Turtle, was attended by a large number of conservation experts and national scientists from the Vietnamese government. Attendees included: Prof. PhD. Mai Dinh Yen, Prof. PhD. Dang Huy Huynh, Assoc. Prof. Ha Dinh Duc, Assoc. Prof. Kim Van Van, PhD. Bui Quang Te, Mr Tran Nguyen Hung, the Director of the Conservation Department of the Directorate of Fisheries, and representatives of the Hanoi DARD, the Hanoi Forestry Protection Department, Hanoi Police, the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Conservation Agency of the Ministry of Nature Resources and Environment, and the Agricultural Development Centre.

The workshop aimed to consult national experts and scientists on the best methods for capturing and confirming the species and sex of the *Rafetus* in Xuan Khanh Lake, as well as attaching a transmitter for future monitoring. This guidance was developed by HFD in collaboration with ATP/IMC, the Central Institute for Research and Environmental Studies (CRES) of Hanoi National University, and WCS Vietnam.



Assoc. Prof. Ha Dinh Duc, a renowned expert on turtles and a great advocate for *Rafetus* conservation. Photo by: WCS Vietnam



Mr Ta Van Son, Director of the Hanoi Fishery Department. Photo by: WCS Vietnam

After a series of presentations by the ATP/IMC and WCS, a lengthy discussion culminated in a universal agreement for the proposed methodologies. For the next steps, HFD will coordinate with the relevant Ministries and Departments, the ATP and the WCS to add further detail to these proposals to reduce the risks associated with turtle health and submit the final guidance to the People's Committee of Hanoi City for approval.

The workshop marked progress as the city pushes to prepare for a breeding program for the legendary Hoan Kiem Turtle. It follows the publishing of "Conservation plan of Hoan Kiem turtles at Xuan Khanh and Dong Mo lake, period of 2018-2020, and vision to 2030" by the People's Committee of Hanoi City on October 2018.



Prof. Ph.D. Dang Huy Huynh, another leading Vietnamese expert on turtles.
Photo by: WCS Vietnam



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