



Asian Turtle Program Indo-Myanmar Conservation



Keep Up To Date

For more news & updates on wildlife conservation in Asia, visit our website:
www.indomyanmarconservation.org
www.asianturtleprogram.com

First Breeding Worldwide: Cologne Zoo Repatriates Endangered Vietnamese Crocodile Newts

On the 7th November 2019, Cologne Zoo repatriated eight **Vietnamese Crocodile Newts** (*Tylototriton vietnamensis*) hatched at the **Cologne Zoo** to their native land of Vietnam. Prof. Dr. Thomas Ziegler, head of the Aquarium and coordinator of Cologne Zoo's biodiversity research and conservation projects in Vietnam, received the crocodile newts at Hanoi airport, Vietnam, along with a team of Ass. Prof. Dr. Truong Q. Nguyen from the partner institute **IEBR** (Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources) in Hanoi.



Offspring of the Vietnamese Crocodile Newts at Cologne Zoo. Photo: Thomas Ziegler

The **Vietnamese Crocodile Newts** were brought to a rearing facility for threatened amphibians in IEBR's Me Linh Station for Biodiversity in northern Vietnam that was jointly developed with **Cologne Zoo**. Here, they will enter a breeding program and then be released to the wild with their offspring later on. The overall goal is to strengthen the natural population of the endangered species.

In March 2018, the first breeding worldwide of this rare newt species was achieved at Cologne Zoo's Aquarium, followed by another in spring 2019. In total, 69 **Vietnamese Crocodile Newts** were successfully reared by terrarium section keeper Anna Rauhaus and her amphibian expert team. Individuals from Cologne Zoo's crocodile newt offspring will be sent to other zoos both in Germany and abroad to extend the breeding program. Beyond that, other individuals from the offspring will be provided to the conservation breeding initiative Citizen Conservation of Frogs and Friends, which involves engaged private keepers. By doing so, Cologne Zoo aims to build up a comprehensive assurance population of the species, which is endangered in the wild and only occurring in few, scattered populations. Cologne Zoo hopes for further successful breeding and further repatriation events.



The packing of the Vietnamese Crocodile Newts at Cologne Zoo. Photo: Thomas Ziegler

Vietnamese Crocodile Newts represent a salamander species that was only discovered 14 years ago. It is endemic for northern Vietnam, which means it is only occurring in this country. Vietnamese Crocodile Newts are listed as **Endangered** in the Red List of Threatened Species of the **IUCN**. The few known natural populations are highly fragmented and threatened by habitat loss, e.g., deforestation, coal mining and pollution. Another threat is collection both for Traditional Chinese Medicine as well as for the pet trade. Based on research performed by the scientific group around Prof. Dr. Ziegler and Ass. Prof. Dr. Nguyen and thanks to a joint application by the EU, Vietnam and China, adapted from the group's comprehensive research data, Vietnamese Crocodile Newts and their congeners were recently included in **Appendix II of CITES** (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) at the **CITES** Conference of the Parties in Geneva, Switzerland, thus resulting in a first international protection.

Conservation breeding programs, as Cologne Zoo is implementing for the Vietnamese Crocodile Newt, belong to the central pillars of conservation efforts, which zoos run in a worldwide scale. The goal is to build up supportive populations for species which are threatened in the wild. This is in particular important for amphibians, as they represent the most threatened vertebrates on earth. It is particular difficult to breed them as, for many species, basic knowledge is lacking. The compilation of research results, regularly completed both in Cologne Zoo and together with students and cooperation partners in the field, is thus of particular importance. Prof. Theo B. Pagel, Director of the Cologne Zoo, and President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA) said: "The pioneer project, which Cologne Zoo jointly performs with its partners for the conservation of the Vietnamese Crocodile Newt, is another successful example of the 'One Plan Approach', which is supported by the IUCN and aims, facing the increasingly dramatic biodiversity loss, to develop integrative strategies to combine in situ and ex situ measures with groups of experts for the purpose of species conservation".

IMC NOTE: Global conservation collaboration is hugely important for species worldwide and, in particular, Vietnam where little is known of many of its native and endemic species. IMC works to conserve many threatened species of amphibians in Vietnam and is pleased to see such cross-country work ending in positive results this species

For further information please contact:
Asian Turtle Program, Indo-Myanmar Conservation

Room 1806, C14 Bac Ha Building, To Huu Road, Nam Tu Liem Dist., Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: +84 (0) 24 7302 8389

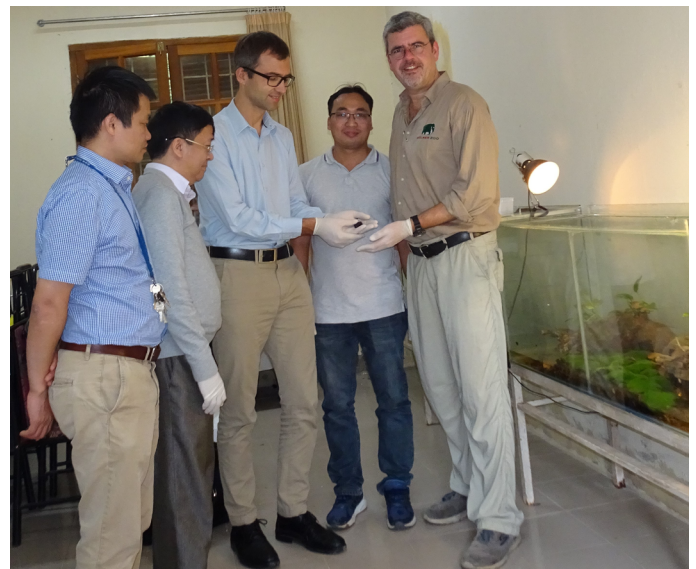
Email: info@asianturtleprogram.org

Website: www.asianturtleprogram.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AsianTurtleProgram



Receiving of the Vietnamese Crocodile Newts at Hanoi airport. Photo: Thomas Ziegler



6 The Vietnamese Crocodile Newts are welcomed at the Me Linh Station by Jörg Rüger from the German Embassy Hanoi
 Photo: Me Linh Station



KÖLNER ZOO

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
WAZA | United for Conservation