

### New hatchlings emerge in Sre Ambel, Cambodia

**Location:** Kaong Rover, Sre Ambel, Cambodia

**Date:** June 2004

**Description of Event:**

Forty hatchling river terrapins (*Batagur baska*) emerged from three nests along the Kaong River, marking the third successful consecutive year that Department of Fisheries staff and international scientists have protected nesting sites belonging to Cambodia's last remaining population of the critically endangered river terrapin. In 2004, only four females nested in traditional nesting beaches compared with eight in 2003 and six in 2002. Hatchling success for the eggs that were left in place where the female nested and protected by fencing to ward off predators, was 62%.

According to Rohan Holloway, a researcher from Canberra University that has been studying the Sre Ambel turtles, all but one of the 40 hatchlings had already grown somewhat from the size reported elsewhere for hatchlings, and extra-embryonic membrane had been absorbed, indicating that the turtles might have spent some time in the nest before emerging.

All of the 2004 hatchlings will be measured, marked and micro-chipped prior to being released on their natal beaches later in June 2004.

The project, supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society, focuses on protecting nesting females and eggs, in addition to initiating other measures aimed at ensuring the species' long-term survival in the Sre Ambel River system.



A newly-born *Batagur baska* hatchling is measured following emergence from the nest. The hatchlings will be marked and released back into the river about a month later.