



Hong Kong Seizure Nets Rare Turtles from Malaysia

Location: Hong Kong

Date: May 8, 2004

Description of Event:

In mid-April, Hong Kong Customs officers seized a shipment turtles representing five species. Based upon initial reports, the turtles included 18 Malayan giant turtle (*Orlitia borneoensis*), 203 Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys dentata*), 174 Malayan flat-shelled turtles (*Notochelys platynota*), 4 spiny terrapins (*Heosemys platynota*), and 420 black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicollis*).

Although information has not yet been made available as to the origin of the shipment, the cargo probably originated in Malaysia where all of these species are native. Both *Orlitia borneoensis* and *Heosemys spinosa* are listed as "Endangered" on the IUCN Red List of threatened species. These two species, in addition to *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* are also listed on Appendix II of CITES, regulating international trade and requiring permits in order to transport across state borders.

On April 21, the Customs and Excise office moved the confiscated turtles to the Hong Kong-based Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, where the animals are to be held and cared for until a determination can be made as to what to do with them. Gary Ades, senior manager at Kadoorie Farms and Botanic Garden, reported that some of the 844 turtles originally seized in the shipment were already dead when they were received.

Efforts by veterinarians and others specializing in rescuing and treating animals confiscated from the trade include re-hydrating the turtles after a long period in transit without water, as well as providing emergency treatment and care for sick and injured animals.

The Hong Kong Agriculture, Fisheries, and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden are working with the U.S.-based Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), European and Australian Zoos to find permanent homes for the confiscated turtles.

Summary by the ATCN from correspondence
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