



# Asian Turtle News

News from the Frontlines of Conservation

The Asian Turtle Conservation Network (ATCN)

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## **New surveys for the Vietnamese Pond Turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) identify additional suitable habitat for the species.**

During late May and early June the Asian Turtle Program's (ATP) carried out interview surveys in the central Vietnamese province of Quang Ngai. The surveys were part of ongoing efforts by the ATP aimed at identifying localities in central Vietnam where the Vietnamese pond turtle, *Mauremys annamensis*, remain in the wild.

The surveys focused on six low lying coastal districts in the province where the landscape is similar to habitat where the species has been reported and found in Quang Nam province, just north of Quang Ngai. Preferred habitat appears to be ponds interspersed amongst rice fields or close to slow moving rivers and streams where adjacent bamboo stands offer shelter to the species during the dry season.

During the survey, 88 interviews were conducted with local residents, fishermen, and others with knowledge of the area. The field team recorded 36 trade records for turtles of seven species including six live specimen records for *Mauremys annamensis*, reportedly originating from the same district of Binh Son. Two of the *Mauremys* specimens were observed locally in close proximity to a pond where they both were reportedly caught.

The *Mauremys annamensis* Project (MAP) was founded in 2007 and is based in Quang Nam province, where a team lives and works at the site where the first confirmed field record in 67 years for the species was documented during surveys in late 2006. The ATP plans to expand conservation activities into Quang Ngai, looking for additional sites where the species may still be found, and working to identify a site that is suitable for developing an ATP reintroduction and breeding program for the species.

### **Photo highlights form the MAP Quang Ngai survey:**



Top left: one of six Vietnamese Pond Turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) observed during the survey.

Top right: Electro-fishing near Quang Ngai city. Much of the local waterways are heavily fished, and most turtles appear to be caught opportunistically by fishermen or found by people working in rice fields.

Bottom left: ATP field team leader Nguyen Xuan Thuan interviews a local man





Top left: A Chinese stripe-necked turtle (*Mauremys [Ocadia] sinensis*) which was caught 50m off shore in the ocean and was identified as a marine turtle by his keeper.

Top right: Son Tra sea fishing village in Binh Son district near where the *Mauremys sinensis* was caught.

The survey was conducted by Tim McCormack, ATP research Coordinator, Nguyen Xuan Thuan, ATP Vietnam coordinator, Nguyen Duc Luong, MAP Conservation Officer, and Vo Sy Phi of the Quang Ngai Forest Protection Department. Support for the survey was provided by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Conservation International.

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