

News Update

Critically Endangered Turtles Rescued from Trade

(Hanoi) January 6, 2009 - Forest Rangers and Environmental Police in Quang Ngai province recently confiscated 19 turtles from the home of a trader including several critically endangered species that are known only to live in Vietnam.

The confiscated turtles comprised six species including six adult Vietnamese pond turtles, (*Mauremys annamensis*), two Bourett's box turtles (*Cuora bouretti*), four adult stripe-necked turtles (*Ocadia sinensis*), one elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*) one Malayan snail-eating turtle (*Malayemys subtrijuga*) and five Asian leaf turtles (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*).

Upon notification of the incident,, the ENV Wildlife Crime Unit coordinated the transfer of the turtles to the Turtle Conservation Center at Cuc Phuong National Park where more than 1,200 turtles reside that have been confiscated from the illegal trade.

“This seizure was particularly significant because the Environmental Police and the Forest Protection Department recognized the importance of the turtles they had confiscated and moved swiftly to transfer the endangered animals over to the turtle center at Cuc Phuong”, says Van Anh, Wildlife Crime Program manager of ENV.

Van Anh notes that *Mauremys annamensis* and *Cuora bouretti* are two species of critical importance to conservation. Both species are listed as critically endangered on IUCN's Red List of globally threatened species, and are native only to central Vietnam.

A conservation breeding program has been established at the Cuc Phuong turtle center for *Mauremys annamensis*. Managers at the park plan to reintroduce the species back into its native habitat in Quang Ngai over the next few years. A field project is also being undertaken by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, which focuses on conservation of surviving populations of the species in central Vietnam.

For more information about efforts to conserve *Mauremys annamensis* and other Vietnamese turtle species, visit the ATCN website www.asianturtlenetwork.org or contact ATCN@fpt.vn

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Education for Nature - Vietnam

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www.envvietnam.org (English)

www.thienhien.org (Vietnamese)

www.savingvietnamswildlife.org (English wildlife crime website)



Above: Bui Dang Phong of the TCC and Nguyen Chi Nhan of the Asian Turtle Program inspect turtles in Quang Ngai.

Below: A mixed crate containing six different species

