

## Chinese softshell turtle at Singapore Botanic Gardens

**Subject:** Chinese softshell turtle, *Pelodiscus sinensis* (Reptilia: Testudines: Trionychidae).

**Subject identified by:** Contributor.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens, Swan Lake; 3 July 2011; 1245 hrs.

**Habitat:** Artificial body of freshwater with concrete banks, mud substrate, and murky water.

**Observer:** Contributor.

**Observation:** An example of about 20 cm carapace length was observed swimming at the surface of the water along the edge of the lake (see accompanying photograph).

**Remarks:** The Chinese softshell turtle is native to central and eastern China, Taiwan and northern Vietnam. Being highly esteemed as food, particularly by the Chinese, this species is farmed in large numbers especially in China, Vietnam and Thailand; and has been introduced to Thailand, Japan and Hawaii (Bonin et al., 2006: 146). This species is also farmed in Singapore, and live examples can be purchased at markets. Therefore, it is commonly used for *fang sheng*, which is the act of releasing animals into the wild to gain spiritual merit for the human (Ng & Lim, 2010: 121, 125). The individual featured here was most likely liberated in the lake by members of the public.

### References:

Bonin, F., B. Devaux & A. Dupré, 2006. *Turtles of the World*. English edition. A & C Black Publishers Ltd, London. 416 pp.

Ng T. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2010. Introduced aquatic herpetofauna of Singapore's reservoirs. *COSMOS*. 6 (1): 117-127.



Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

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