

## Malaysian giant terrapin at the Singapore Botanic Gardens

**Subject:** Malaysian giant terrapin, *Orlitia borneensis* (Reptilia: Testudines: Geoemydidae).

**Subject identified by:** Noel Thomas.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens, Swan Lake; 2 October 2014 at 1730hrs and 3 October 2014 at 1820hrs.

**Habitat:** Artificial body of murky freshwater lined with concrete banks, in parkland environment.

**Observers:** Contributors.

**Observation:** The featured individual, an adult of at least 50 cm carapace length (actual size unknown), was observed on two separate days. On both occasions, it had surfaced for air for about one minute in the middle of the lake (see accompanying picture).

**Remarks:** This large terrapin can reach carapace lengths of about 80 cm and is the largest freshwater turtle in Southeast Asia. It ranges from Peninsula Malaysia, Borneo and Sumatra where it inhabits stream and river systems, and is endangered throughout its range (Auliya, 2007: 64). However individuals encountered in the wild in Singapore are most likely introduced (Ng & Lim, 2010: 123). There have been records from MacRitchie, Lower Peirce, Upper Seletar Reservoirs and the Nee Soon swamp-forest (Chua, 2014; Ng & Lim, 2010: 123).

### References:

- Auliya, M., 2007. *An Identification Guide to the Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore and Timor Leste*. TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. 98 pp.
- Chua, M. A. H., 2014. Malaysian giant terrapin at Nee Soon swamp-forest. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2014: 45.
- Ng T. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2010. Introduced aquatic herpetofauna of Singapore's reservoirs. *COSMOS*. 6 (1): 117–127.



Photograph by Law Ing Sind

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