

## Skeletal remains of a pig-nosed turtle in Tampines Quarry

**Subject:** Pig-nosed turtle, *Carettochelys insculpta* (Reptilia: Testudines: Carettochelyidae).

**Subject identified by:** Contributor.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Tampines Quarry; 20 July 2014; 2000 hrs.

**Habitat:** Artificial freshwater lake surrounded by scrubland.

**Observer:** Contributor.

**Observation:** The disarticulated skeleton of a pig-nosed turtle, comprising the skull (without the mandible), fragments of the carapace, and a few limb bones, was found submerged among rocks in the shallow edge of the lake (Figs. 1 & 2).

**Remarks:** The cranium, about 8 cm in length (Fig. 3), was recovered and will be deposited in the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC) of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore.

The pig-nosed turtle is native to inland waterways of southern New Guinea and the Northern Territory in Australia (Burgess & Lilly, 2014). This species was illegally imported in large numbers and widely available in pet shops in Singapore up until the early 2000s (Goh & O’Riordan, 2007). Free-ranging examples in Singapore are most likely abandoned pets. Ng & Lim (2010) recorded a carcass at MacRitchie Reservoir, and the contributor has observed one in the Eco-Lake at the Singapore Botanic Gardens in October 2013.

### References:

- Burgess, E. A. & R. Lilly, 2014. *Assessing the Trade in Pig-nosed Turtles Carettochelys insculpta in Papua, Indonesia*. TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. 40 pp.
- Goh T. Y. & R. M. O’Riordan, 2007. Are tortoises and freshwater turtles still traded illegally as pets in Singapore? *Oryx*. 41 (1): 97–100.
- Ng T. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2010. Introduced aquatic herpetofauna of Singapore’s reservoirs. *COSMOS*. 6 (1): 117–127.



Fig. 1. Disarticulated skeletal remains of a pig-nosed turtle in the water of the quarry lake. Photograph by Ivan W. M. Kwan



Fig. 2. Skeletal elements of the pig-nosed turtle brought onto land.



Fig. 3. Lateral view of the turtle's cranium with snout pointing to the left.

Photographs by Ivan W.M. Kwan

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