

Terrapins in the Symphony Lake of the Singapore Botanic Gardens

Subjects: East Indian box terrapin, *Cuora amboinensis* (Reptilia: Testudines: Geoemydidae) [Fig. 1]; Cuban slider, *Trachemys decussata* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae) [Fig. 2]; Red-eared slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans* ((Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae) [Fig. 3 & 4].

Subjects identified by: Contributor and Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens, Symphony Lake; 27 June 2015; between 1730 and 1745 hrs.

Habitat: Artificial water body with concrete edges, in urban parkland.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Members of the public feeding the aquatic inhabitants of the lake afforded an opportunity for documenting the larger animals present in there. More than 50 terrapins were counted at the surface of the water during the observation. Among them are one *Cuora amboinensis* (Fig. 1), and around six examples tentatively identified as *Trachemys decussata* (Fig. 2). The remainder consists of *Trachemys scripta elegans* (Fig. 3 & 4).

Remarks: Of the turtles recently recorded at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the red-eared slider appears to be the dominant species. The Cuban slider was previously recorded (Lim, 2013), as were a Malaysian giant terrapin, *Orlitia borneensis* (Law et al., 2014), a Chinese softshell turtle, *Pelodiscus sinensis* (Lim, 2014) and a pig-nosed turtle, *Carettochelys insculpta* (Kwan, 2015). The present observation includes the East Indian box terrapin. Although the box terrapin is known to be native to Singapore (Ng & Lim, 2010), the featured individual was most likely abandoned at the gardens as it was relatively unafraid of people.

References:

- Kwan, I. W. M., 2015. Skeletal remains of a pig-nosed turtle in Tampines Quarry. *Singapore Biodiversity Records*. 2015: 95-96.
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- Ng T. H. & K. K. P. Lim, 2010. Introduced aquatic herpetofauna of Singapore's reservoirs. *COSMOS*. 6 (1): 117-127.



Fig. 1. *Cuora amboinensis* of about 20 cm carapace length. Photograph by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 2. This example of about 20 cm carapace length is tentatively identified as *Trachemys decussata*.

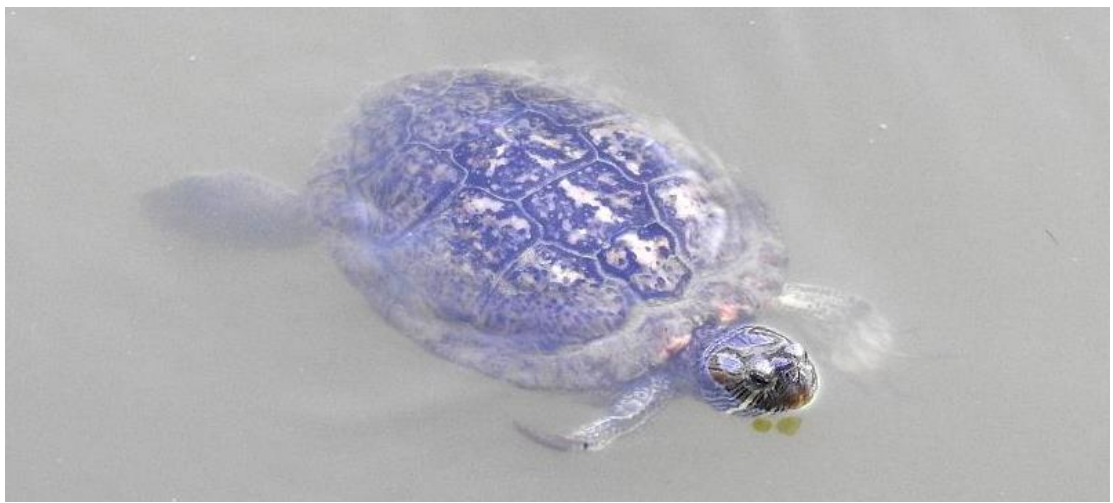


Fig. 3. *Trachemys scripta elegans* of about 15 cm carapace length with carapacial scutes apparently partially eroded.



Fig. 4. A group of basking *Trachemys scripta elegans*. Largest example of about 25 cm carapace length.

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui

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