

Chinese striped-neck terrapins at Singapore Botanic Gardens

Subjects: Chinese striped-neck terrapin, *Mauremys sinensis* (Reptilia: Testudines: Geoemydidae)

Subjects identified by: Tan Heok Hui.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens, Symphony Lake; 20 February 2013; around 1305 hrs.

Habitat: Artificial body of freshwater in urban parkland, planted with water lilies (e.g. *Victoria amazonica*).

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Two adult animals of about 20 cm carapace length were observed basking in the sun (Fig. 1) among vegetation on the edge of the lake alongside red ear sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). They then took to the water (Fig. 2) where they were observed feeding on the foliage of the water lilies.

Remarks: In Singapore the Chinese striped-neck terrapin has been recorded at East Coast Park, Bedok Reservoir, Upper Peirce Reservoir, MacRitchie Reservoir, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and Swan Lake in the Singapore Botanic Gardens (Ng, 2009; Ng & Lim, 2010; Baker, 2015; Trageser, 2015). The featured individuals appear to be the first record of the species at the Symphony Lake of the gardens where the East Indian box terrapin (*Cuora amboinensis*), Cuban slider (*Trachemys decussata*) and red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) have been recorded (Tan, 2015).

Mauremys sinensis is native to southern China, Hainan, Taiwan, Laos and Vietnam, and is regarded as 'endangered' and listed on CITES Appendix III (Fritz & Havaš, 2007; Rhodin et al., 2010). Individuals seen in Singapore are most likely abandoned pets, and they have not been known to reproduce there in the feral state (Ng & Lim, 2010).

References:

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Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the two individuals of Chinese stripe-necked terrapin at the edge of the Symphony Lake.



Fig. 2. One of the turtles after it took to the water.

Photographs by Lahiru S. Wijedasa