A probable yellow-headed temple terrapin at Venus Drive


Subject identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Thomson, Venus Drive; 18 December 2016; 2019 hrs.

Habitat: Edge of young secondary forest.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: One example, between 30 and 35 cm carapace length, was found on the ground. The accompanying picture shows the dorso-frontal view of the animal in-situ.

Remarks: This specimen is tentatively identified as *Hieremys annandalii* on the basis of its blackish, relatively smooth-edged, rectangular carapace that has squarish vertebral scutes and lacks a dorsal ridge in the adult (see Auliya, 2007: 50). The featured individual seems to be in poor condition. There is an injury on the anterior left side of its carapace, and the skin on the neck seems to be inflamed. It is likely to have been illegally imported and abandoned.

*Hieremys annandalii* is native to Thailand, Indochina and the northern parts of Peninsular Malaysia (Auliya, 2007: 50). This species gains its name ‘temple terrapin’ from the native custom of Thai people in placing these turtles in Buddhist temples to earn good karma (Ernst & Barbour, 1989: 161). If the identification is correct, this would appear to be the first time *Hieremys annandalii* is reported in Singapore (see Ng & Lim, 2010; Baker & Lim, 2012).

References:

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