

Biodiversity Record: First record of giant Asian pond turtle nesting in Singapore

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Subject: Giant Asian pond turtle, *Heosemys grandis* (Reptilia: Testudines: Geoemydidae).

Subject identified by: Cheong Wai Lun.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, northeastern part of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve; 9 January 2024; 2108 hrs.

Habitat: Edge of secondary forest. On an open patch of grass.

Observers: Cheong Wai Lun, Zyon Aaronel Wee Zhun Wei and Naomi Kim.

Observations: A turtle of about 30 cm carapace length was spotted digging a hole (Fig. 1) with both her hind legs (Fig. 2) at around 2108 hrs. She continued excavating the hole for around 33 minutes and at around 2141 hrs, deposited five eggs into the hole (Fig. 3). The turtle proceeded to cover the nest with soil with her hind legs. The observers left the scene and did not observe the fully covered nest.

The nesting process, recorded on video by Zyon Aaronel Wee Zhun Wei, can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxko5KeRRKw>.

The night before, on 8 January 2024, the same turtle was seen in the same general area (Fig. 4) by the first observer. She was observed for about 30 minutes until she moved into the adjacent forest. During that time, no feeding behaviour was noted.

Remarks: This seems to be the first record of *Heosemys grandis* nesting in Singapore, although hatchlings have previously been documented from Upper Seletar Reservoir Park in May 2012 (Fung & Lim, 2013) and from a suburban housing estate in the Seletar area in July 2014 (Khong & Lim, 2014). This species has been recorded from inside the Central Catchment Nature Reserve (Tan & Lim, 2013; Law, 2014; Mehta & Lim, 2021), as well as in peripheral suburban areas (Ng & Lim, 2010; Khong & Lim, 2014), and also at Jurong Lake and Kranji Reservoir (Figueroa et al., 2023). In Singapore, *Heosemys grandis* is regarded as an uncommon non-native species that has established a feral local population (Figueroa et al., 2023).

Literature cited:

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Fig. 1. Initial observation of *Heosemys grandis* excavating a nest at 2108 hrs on 9 January 2024. Fig. 2. A view of the nest hole before the eggs were deposited. Fig. 3. Deposition of five eggs at 2141 hrs on 9 January 2024. Fig. 4. The same turtle at the same general area the night before, on 8 January 2024 (Photographs by: Cheong Wai Lun).