

Biodiversity Record: A giant Amazon river turtle, *Podocnemis expansa*, at Bedok Reservoir

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Subject: Giant Amazon river turtle, *Podocnemis expansa* (Reptilia: Testudines: Pleurodira: Podocnemididae).

Subject identified by: Tan Jian Qing.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bedok Reservoir, near fishing deck; 5 March 2024; around 1332 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater. Along the shore of an artificial lake in an urban area.

Observer: Tan Jian Qing.

Observation: One example, with a pale brown carapace of about 30 cm, was spotted basking on a sloping concrete structure during light rain (Fig. 1). It entered the water about 5 minutes later when the rain got heavier.



Fig. 1. Rear view of the sideneck turtle at Bedok Reservoir (Photograph by: Tan Jian Qing).

Remarks: The giant Amazon river turtle is native to tropical South America, in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Venezuela, and is known to attain a maximum carapace length of 109 cm (Rhodin et al., 2021). The example herein featured seems to be the first record of *Podocnemis expansa* observed in the wild in Singapore (see Figueroa et al., 2023). It is believed to be an abandoned pet that may have been imported illegally into the country because apart from the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and the Malayan box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*), no other chelonian can be legally traded or owned by a private individual in Singapore (NParks, 2021).

This is the second species of the sideneck turtle family Podocnemididae to be recorded in Singapore (Figueroa et al., 2023). In 2018, a congeneric yellow-spotted river turtle, *Podocnemis unifilis*, of about 20 cm carapace length was photographed in Sungei Tampines at Pasir Ris Park (Chua, 2018).

Literature cited:

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- Rhodin AGJ, Iverson JB, Bour R, Fritz U, Georges A, Shaffer HB & van Dijk PP (2021) Turtles of the World. Annotated Checklist and Atlas of Taxonomy, Synonymy, Distribution, and Conservation Status (9th edition). In: Rhodin AGJ, Iverson JB, van Dijk PP, Stanford CB, Goode EV, Buhlmann KA & Mittermeier RA (eds) Conservation Biology of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises: A Compilation Project of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group. Chelonian Research Monographs, 8: 1–472.