

Biodiversity Record: Florida red-bellied cooters at Bukit Timah

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Subjects: Florida red-bellied cooter, *Pseudemys nelsoni* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae).

Subjects identified by: Chen Xuanhe.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Bukit Timah, Dairy Farm area; 30 April 2024; around 1035 hrs.

Habitat: An artificial pond in parkland.

Observers: Chen Xuanhe and Uwe Will.

Observations: Three juvenile examples were observed in the pond. The largest was about 12 cm in carapace length (Fig. 1). All seemed unafraid of the observers.

Remarks: This appears to be the first record of Florida red-bellied cooter in Singapore (see Figueroa et al., 2023). A congeneric coastal plain cooter (*Pseudemys floridana*) has been tentatively identified and photographed at MacRitchie Reservoir (Baker, 2015). *Pseudemys nelsoni*, which is native to North America in Florida and Georgia, has a prominent notch bordered on each side by tooth-like cusps on its upper jaw, a light vertical band on each pleural scute, few light stripes on the head, and an arrow mark on top of the snout (Ernst & Barbour, 1989; Powell et al., 2016). The bold behaviour of the featured turtles suggests that they were abandoned pets.



Fig. 1. Latero-frontal view of one of the subjects in-situ (Photograph by Chen Xuanhe).

Literature cited:

- Baker N (2015) Cuban slider and common cooter at MacRitchie Reservoir. Singapore Biodiversity Records, 2015: 56–57.
- Ernst CH & Barbour RW (1989) Turtles of the World. Smithsonian Institution Press, xii + 313 pp.
- Powell R, Conant R & Collins JT (2016) Peterson Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America. Fourth edition. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, USA, xiii + 494 pp.
- Figueroa A, Low MEY & Lim KKP (2023) Singapore's herpetofauna: updated and annotated checklist, history, conservation, and distribution. Zootaxa, 5287: 1–378.