

Inclusion of Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Hieremys annandalii* in Appendix II.

Proponent: China and United States of America.

Summary: *H. annandalii* is a large, herbivorous, predominantly aquatic turtle which can reach a carapace length of 45 cm and weight of 12 kg. It inhabits the rivers and freshwater marshes of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam; its presence in Myanmar has yet to be confirmed. Clutches of four to six eggs are produced, it is not known whether multiple clutches are laid. The species is classified as Endangered by IUCN. Although no specific information is available on population trends, it is thought to be in decline in Lao PDR and Thailand, and is generally considered 'threatened' throughout its range. Identified threats include collection pressure, habitat modification and habitat loss. The Yellow-headed Temple Turtle is known to be used in Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam and is likely to be harvested amongst the widespread non-species specific collection of turtles in Cambodia and Lao PDR. Little information exists on international trade in this species, though it undoubtedly enters trade as confirmed by its occurrence in markets in China and in confiscated shipments. The species is afforded some protection in Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam; it is not protected in Lao PDR; its legal status in Cambodia and Malaysia, is unclear. The proponents seek inclusion of the Yellow-headed Temple Turtle in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 2a criteria A and Bi) on the grounds that if international trade is not strictly regulated the species will meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future and that harvesting of specimens from the wild will exceed, over an extended period, the level that can be continued in perpetuity.

Analysis Following Resolution Conf. 9.24 the available information suggests that *H. annandalii* meets the criteria for inclusion in Appendix II (Bi) on the basis that although widely distributed, the endangered status of the species together with indications of trade from most range States suggests that trade will be unsustainable. Data on international trade are limited, but the majority of trade is unlikely to be recorded.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
	<u>Taxonomy</u>
Synonyms: <i>Cyclemys annandalii</i> .	
	<u>Range</u>
Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia (Peninsular), Myanmar?, Thailand, Viet Nam.	
	<u>IUCN Global Category</u>
EN A1cd +2d	

Biological and trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix II

A) Trade regulation needed to prevent future inclusion in Appendix I

B) Harvesting for international trade has, or may have, detrimental impact on population

(i) exceeds sustainable yield; (ii) reduces population to potentially threatened level

H. annandalii has a low reproductive rate with four to six eggs laid per clutch, it is not known whether more than one clutch is produced. Maturity is expected to be late as in many other turtles.

The species is likely collected for local use in each country of occurrence, for either food and or religious release animals though actual numbers are not known. The species occurs in lowland wetlands and habitat loss and modification are of concern. Populations are presumed to be in decline throughout the species' range.

Cambodia: the species is endangered due to exploitation, though this population is probably the

The large size of the species makes it susceptible to collection pressure (Stuart and Timmins, 2000).

Thailand: *Small numbers are recorded in illegal trade although there is no evidence of an international component to this trade (van Dijk and Palasuwan, 2000).*

Lao PDR: *A 1999 report classified this species as subject to a 'high level' of threat from harvesting and trade and a 'lower level' of threat from habitat loss (Duckworth et al. 1999). Some illegal international trade in this species occurs from Lao PDR, although numbers involved are not known (Dethprachanh, 2002).*

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<p>most important in conservation terms. It is presumed to be included in the substantial reported exports of turtles (200 tons (203 tonnes0) quota approved for 1998-1999).</p> <p>Lao PDR: the paucity of recent field records during surveys indicates that the population has declined considerably; this decline is attributed to collection pressure. In recent years, most individuals caught are likely to have been exported, rather than consumed locally. Data are lacking, but the species is probably included in export shipments of 'turtles'.</p> <p>Malaysia: The population is reported to be marginal and very small and is being used for religious purposes.</p> <p>Myanmar: the species is presumed very rare. Although export of turtles from Myanmar is illegal, substantial quantities of species endemic to Myanmar have been observed for sale in mainland China.</p> <p>Thailand: uncommon and presumed depleted in most areas, populations are likely to be in decline due to collection of adults and habitat loss and degradation. Collection is mainly to supply specialist restaurants and is fairly intensive and well-organised. No official export data or estimates of trade quantities are available for Thailand, however illegal exports are thought to occur.</p> <p>Viet Nam: the species is probably nearing extinction, the main threats being collection and habitat loss. As the turtle's habitat is in close proximity to humans, it is probable that exploitation is relatively high and the species is unlikely to be able to sustain such levels of collection. In recent years, most individuals caught are likely to have been exported, rather than consumed locally. No official export data or estimates of trade quantities are available for Viet Nam, however, it may be that this species has been exported under permits for <i>H. grandis</i> due to its similarity of appearance.</p> <p>Yellow Headed Temple Turtles are fairly uncommon in trade seizures along the land route between Viet Nam and China.</p>	<p><i>Trade data for China for 2000 records the import of up to 8 340 live specimens of H. annandalii (CITES Management Authority of China, 2002). This is one of the commonest species found in the food markets of Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Haikou. Most are reportedly imported into Guangzhou, China, from Malaysia, from where they are distributed to Shanghai, Haikou and other cities (Ma Jianfan, 2002). Surveys from October 2000 to October 2001 recorded over 7 000 offered for sale in three food markets in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, China. Several hundred specimens were also seen for sale at Qing Ping market on 22 October 2001 (TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>The species is reportedly used in traditional medicine in Taiwan POC but is not recorded in pet markets (Chen et al., 2000).</i></p> <p><i>Small numbers have been recorded for sale in reptile shops in Japan in 2002 (Kameoka, in prep.) and trade data from the US show imports of small numbers (174 from March 1998 to June 2001) probably destined for the pet trade (TRAFFIC North America, 2002).</i></p>

Other information

Threats

The species can tolerate moderate levels of organic water pollution and habitat modification, however, habitat loss is of concern in several countries and populations are likely to be declining. Habitat availability in Thailand is described as 'worrisome' as most suitable habitat has been converted to agricultural land and water flow is regulated.

Conservation, management and legislation

Although it appears that wild animals cannot be hunted with traps, sold, commercialised or transported in Cambodia, export of turtles is legal, restricted by an annual quota and by the size of individual turtles.

In Myanmar, trade is prohibited and collection can only occur outside protected areas. The species is

Legislation in Cambodia is unclear.

Legislation to protect turtles is not effectively enforced in Myanmar (CITES Management Authority of

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<p>specifically protected from exploitation in Thailand. A permit is required for commerce and trade in Viet Nam and export of all native turtle species is prohibited. It is not protected in Lao PDR; in Malaysia the situation is unclear and legislation varies between different parts of the country.</p> <p>A Turtle Conservation and Ecology project began in Viet Nam in 1998.</p>	<p><i>Myanmar, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>For information on recent import restrictions to China, see Conservation, Management and Legislation section of the analysis of CoP 12 Prop. 20, to include Platysternon megalacephalum in Appendix II.</i></p>
<u>Similar species</u>	
<p>It is possible that <i>H. annandalii</i> may have been exported from Viet Nam under permits for <i>Heosemys grandis</i> due to their similarity of appearance. <i>Cuora amboinensis</i> resemble juvenile <i>Hieremys</i>, but can be distinguished as the former has a plastron hinge.</p>	
<u>Captive breeding</u>	
	<p><i>There is no known captive breeding of the species in Lao PDR (Dethprachanh, 2002) or China (TRAFFIC East Asia, 2002).</i></p>
<u>Other comments</u>	
<p>The consensus recommendation of the Technical Workshop on Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia, Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002 supported this proposal and the species was regarded as one of the 11 highest priorities for inclusion in CITES Appendix II.</p>	<p><i>The Cambodian Department of Fisheries treats the protection of turtles in Cambodia as a priority and is undertaking species inventories. Studies have not yet been extended to collect information on abundance and conservation management of turtles and the Department is reluctant to support the proposal without this information (CITES Management Authority of Cambodia, 2002).</i></p>

Reviewers: TRAFFIC East Asia, TRAFFIC North America, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

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