

Inclusion of Malayan Giant Turtle *Orlitia borneensis* in Appendix II. Proponent: China and Germany (on behalf of the Member States of the European Community).

Summary: The Malayan giant turtle, *Orlitia borneensis* is a large (carapace length of up to 80 cm), omnivorous, freshwater turtle which inhabits the lowland wetlands of Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak (Malaysia), Kalimantan and Sumatra (Indonesia). Little specific information is available on growth rate, age of maturity or longevity. Females lay a maximum clutch size of 40 eggs, but it is not known whether more than one clutch is produced each year. The species' range may have contracted southwards in Peninsular Malaysia and, based on information from hunters and traders, numbers have 'declined considerably' in Indonesia where it is now considered 'uncommon'. Habitat loss has been identified as a problem for the species. The extent of remaining suitable habitat in Kalimantan, Sumatra and Sarawak is unknown but substantial areas apparently exist intact in southern Peninsular Malaysia. The species is classified as Endangered by IUCN. *O. borneensis* has been collected in Malaysia for local consumption and for use in religious ceremonies although recent surveys have not encountered it at markets. There is a demand for the species with most specimens in international trade evidently destined for food markets in Asia and a smaller number for the international pet trade. Official Malaysian statistics record exports of almost 22 000 wild-collected individuals between January and October 1999. Although the species is strictly protected in Indonesia, it is suspected that illegal trade is substantial and large quantities of specimens originating in Indonesia are sold food markets in east Asian. In 2000, China issued permits for the import of 99 220 *Orlitia*. The proponents seek to include the species in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, and Resolution Conf. 9.24 Annex 2a criteria Bi) on the grounds 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 species appears to meet the criterion for inclusion in Appendix II (Bi) on the basis that international trade is known, inferred or projected to be unsustainable. Populations are reportedly in decline and the limited trade information indicates that trade is at relatively high levels; there may be an additional quantity in trade which is unrecorded.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<u>Taxonomy</u>	
Synonyms: <i>Bellia borneensis</i> , <i>Clemmys (Heteroclemmys) gibbera</i> , <i>Hardella baileyi</i> , <i>Brookeia baileyi</i> , <i>Adelochelys crassa</i> , <i>Liemys inornata</i> .	
<u>Range</u>	
Malaysia: Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak Indonesia: Kalimantan, Sumatra	
<u>IUCN Global Category</u>	
EN A1cd +2cd	

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

Indonesia: *O. borneensis* is reported as 'uncommon'. Information from traders and trappers suggests that populations may have 'declined considerably'. Although the species is strictly protected in Indonesia, it is suspected that illegal trade is substantial and large quantities of specimens originating there are exported and sold in food markets in east Asia. Exports of this species from Kalimantan began in the late 1980s and from Sumatra in the mid-1990s and it is now widely accepted among traders that supplies of

Indonesia: Live specimens are collected for export and during September 1999, middleman and exporter purchasing prices for *O. borneensis* in trade in north Sumatra were approximately IDR 7 000 and 8 000 - 10 000 (USD 0.80 and 0.56 to USD 1.46) per kg respectively, depending on the location (Shepherd, 2000).

Viet Nam: Records maintained by the CITES Management Authority of Viet Nam for trade in turtles,

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<p>this species are and have been declining from these areas during recent years of intensive collection. In Sumatra, the species was observed in surveys of traders as one of the four most commonly traded species between 1996 and 1999. In 1999 a single trader was observed to be holding 250 individuals. There is no demand for any eggs of this species that may be laid before export, and traders discard them.</p> <p>In Peninsular Malaysia, the species' range may have contracted southwards, but ample habitat remains intact and it was supposed in 2000 that two 'good' populations existed in the south-east. The species is exploited locally for its meat in Malaysia. In 1976, the species was reported as available for sale, but results of subsequent surveys reported in 1987, 1999 and 2000 did not encounter this species. Official Malaysian statistics record exports of 21 972 wild-collected individuals from Peninsular Malaysia between January and October 1999.</p> <p>Small numbers of Malayan Giant Turtle are traded for the international pet trade with most destined for Europe and the USA.</p> <p>In 2000, permits were issued for the import of 99 220 <i>Orlitia</i> into China. During a one-year survey ending in October 2001, over 4 000 specimens of the species were observed for sale in Hong Kong SAR.</p>	<p>2000 – 2001, report the re-export of 200 specimens of <i>O. borneensis</i> to China in 2000. These specimens were apparently originally imported from Malaysia (TRAFFIC Southeast Asia – Indochina, 2002, cited in TRAFFIC East Asia, 2002).</p> <p>In the 1980s the Malayan Giant Turtle was the most expensive species in live animal exporters' price lists, at USD 300 - 350 each; at that time they were reported to be 'very rare and difficult to obtain' (Jenkins, 1995). Specimens are still advertised for sale as pets and recently a 30 cm specimen was advertised for sale on a US based internet site for USD225 (TRAFFIC East Asia, 2002). A market survey conducted by TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan in March 2002 in two areas (Kantoh and Kansai) and visiting 32 reptile shops, documented the occurrence of <i>O. borneensis</i> in five shops (Kameoka, in prep).</p>

Other information

Threats

Targeted exploitation and habitat loss through conversion to agriculture, river modification and pollution are the main threats.

Conservation, management and legislation

No population monitoring or management measures have been undertaken or are planned for this species.

Malaysia: The species may inhabit protected areas in Peninsula Malaysia, where aboriginal communities have subsistence exploitation rights; however, some specimens collected from protected areas are thought to enter commercial trade. In Perak State, Peninsular Malaysia, egg harvesting and trapping of *O. borneensis* is restricted. The species is afforded some degree of protection in several other states; in Sabah the Wild Life Enactment 1997 lists *Orlitia* as a protected species and the species has been totally protected in Sarawak since 1998.

Indonesia: The species is strictly protected from exploitation. It may inhabit protected areas in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

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 megacephalum* in Appendix II.

Similar species

Small individuals of *Orlitia borneensis* can resemble adult *Siebenrockiella crassicollis* (the subject of proposal 29).

Captive breeding

No commercial captive breeding takes place in range States. Some turtle farms in China may produce eggs and hatchlings.

Shi et al. (2002) report that this species may be captive-bred in China as per reports from farmers,

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<p>There have been efforts by hobbyists in Europe and North America to breed the species for conservation, however, it is thought that only two successful hatches have taken place, in 1991 and 1992, resulting in a total of 18 hatchlings.</p>	<p><i>traders and hobbyists.</i></p>

Other comments

The Governments of Indonesia and China expressed their willingness to act as co-proponents of this proposal.

All participants of the Technical workshop on trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises in Asia, Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002, including representatives from range and non-range countries, supported this proposal.

Jenkins (1995) identifies O. borneensis as a 'priority species for study' and recommended a review of international trade controls, including consideration of the possibility that this species should be included in the CITES Appendices. The delegates from the southeast Asia subregion at the workshop on conservation and trade of freshwater turtles and tortoises in Asia (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1-4 December, 1999) recommended that this species be considered for inclusion in Appendix I.

Reviewers: TRAFFIC East Asia, TRAFFIC East Asia - Japan, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

References:

- Jenkins, M.D., 1995. *Tortoises and freshwater turtles: the trade in southeast Asia*. TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK.
- Kameoka, S., in prep. Market Survey of Turtles and Tortoises in Japan. TRAFFIC East Asia – Japan. *in litt* to TRAFFIC East Asia. *in litt* to TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK.
- Shepherd, C.R., 2000. Export of live freshwater turtles and tortoises from North Sumatra and Riau, Indonesia: a case study. In: van Dijk, P.P., Stuart, B.L. and Rhodin, A.G.J. (Eds.), *Asian Turtle Trade: Proceedings of a Workshop on Conservation and Trade of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia. Chelonian Research Monographs 2*: 112-119.
- Shi, H., Lau, M., Tienshi, C. and Parham, J.R., 2002. The status of trade, captive breeding, research and conservation of the Chelonians in China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan. Presentation given at the Technical Workshop on Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises, Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, 25 - 28 March 2002. TRAFFIC East Asia, 2002. *in litt*. to IUCN/SSC Wildlife Trade Programme, Cambridge, UK.