



Asian Turtle Program Indo - Myanmar Conservation



Indo-Myanmar
Conservation

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The release team searched for appropriate habitats to release the turtles such as this rocky spring and waterfall. Photo by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.

28 endangered Big-headed Turtles back home in the wild

From 25th to 27th of May 2020, a team of the Turtle Conservation Centre (TCC) of Cuc Phuong National Park and the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) went on a special mission to take 28 Big-headed Turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) back home to a protected area in northern Vietnam.

These rare turtles are an Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species and part of the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) EDGE of Existence programme with whom ATP/IMC are collaborating with.

The 28 turtles had been rescued from the illegal wildlife trade and rehabilitated at the TCC for a period while they recovered and gained enough strength for their journey back to the wild. Once again, we tried to follow the IUCN's wild animal release guidelines as best as possible; therefore we



Releasing Big-headed Turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) is important due to the difficulty in keeping them in captivity; we are delighted to send them home and boost wild populations too.

Photo by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.

collected blood, faecal and saliva samples to test for disease-causing pathogens and parasites and investigate the genetics of each individual.

We would like to thank all the hard-working staff who have provided great care to the animals in captivity and who went on this physically demanding release trip. We are also grateful to Fondation Segré Conservation Fund and the EDGE of Existence programme for their support to this project, our other project partners, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), Paignton Zoo, Nordens Ark, the Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES), and all of our numerous partners who have contributed along the way.



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The release involved climbing up high in a mountainous area and was physically challenging for the release team.

Photo by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.



The release team had to work together to traverse this tough terrain and place the turtles in hard-to-reach areas.

Photo by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.



Tran Bao Ngoc of the Turtle Conservation Centre released one of 28 Big-headed Turtles during this release.

Photo by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.