

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

A. Proposal

Inclusion of *Mauremys mutica* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II 2(a) of the Convention, and satisfying Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 2a, Criteria A and B).

B. Proponent

People's Republic of China and United States of America, in accordance with the consensus recommendation of the CITES-sponsored Technical Workshop on Conservation of and Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia held in Kunming, China in March 2002.

C. Supporting statement1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Reptilia

1.2 Order: Testudines

1.3 Family: Bataguridae

1.4 Species: *Mauremys mutica* (Cantor, 1842)

Subspecies: 1 subspecies has been described: *M. m. kami* Yasukawa, Ota, and Iverson 1996.

1.5 Scientific synonyms: *Emys muticus*, *Clemmys mutica*

1.6 Common names: English: Yellow Pond Turtle
French:
Spanish:

1.7 Code numbers:

2. Biological parameters

2.1 Distribution

Mauremys mutica is found in China, Japan, and Viet Nam. China: This species is widespread in central and southern China, including Yunnan, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hunan, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan provinces (Lau and Shi, 2000). Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: This species is known from several locations in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR), but the few specimens found thus far are almost certainly released animals (Lau et al., 2000). Japan: There is a small population of yellow Pond Turtles in Japan (van Dijk, 2002). Viet Nam: The Yellow Pond Turtle is found in marshes, ponds, and slow moving streams in the lowland regions of northern and north-central Viet Nam (Hendrie, 2000).

2.2 Habitat availability

China: *M. mutica* lives in water bodies in basins and rivers and there are still many suitable habitats left in China (Lau and Shi, 2000). Japan: There is no information on habitat availability for this

species in Japan. Viet Nam: Habitat availability for *M. mutica* is unknown but there is reduced habitat resulting from the agricultural conversion of wetlands and marshes (Hendrie, 2000).

2.3 Population status

China: The Yellow Pond Turtle is considered endangered in China (Zhao, 1998 cited in Lau and Shi, 2000). Japan: This species is considered Vulnerable in southern Ryukyus, Japan (Yasukawa et al., in press as cited in Rhodin, 2002). Viet Nam: This species is considered endangered in Viet Nam (Rhodin, 2002).

2.4 Population trends

China: Once one of the commonest turtles for sale in the Chinese food market, *M. mutica* has become uncommon in recent years indicating substantial declines in the wild populations (Lau and Shi, 2000). Japan: No information was available on the population trends of *M. mutica* in Japan. Viet Nam: Population trends for the Yellow Pond Turtle are unknown but it is likely to be in decline due to hunting and habitat loss (Hendrie, 2000). There has been a decline observed recently in market supply of this species (B. Chan, R. Kan, M. Lau, pers. comm. as cited in Rhodin, 2002).

2.5 Geographic trends

No information was available on the geographic trends of this species from any of the range countries.

2.6 Role of the species in its ecosystem

The Yellow Pond Turtle is omnivorous and known to feed on various plant and animal materials including roots, shoots of plants, aquatic invertebrates such as insects, sewage worms, and leeches (Chen et al., 2000).

2.7 Threats

China: The main threat to the Yellow Pond Turtle is over-collecting for the food trade, urbanization, water pollution, and the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides that cause habitat destruction and degradation (Lau and Shi, 2000). Japan: No information was available on threats to this species in Japan. Viet Nam: Threats to *M. mutica* are from collection and habitat loss (Hendrie, 2000).

3. Utilization and trade

3.1 National utilization

China: *M. mutica* has been recorded in food trade in China (Lau and Shi, 2000), and the food and pet trade in Hong Kong SAR (Lau et al., 2000). Additionally, in Hong Kong SAR, the plastron of *M. mutica* is commonly used in preparing turtle jelly (Lau et al., 2000). Japan: No information on the national utilization of the Yellow Pond Turtle was available for Japan. Viet Nam: *M. mutica* might have been hunted for local consumption in the past but today, it is likely that turtles encountered are sold to traders (Hendrie, 2000).

3.2 Legal international trade

China: The Yellow Pond Turtle is one of eight Asian species that were consistently present in the food trade (Lau et al., 2000). Japan: No information was available for *M. mutica* in Japan. Viet Nam: No *M. mutica* were legally exported between 1994 and 1999 according to official CITES office records (Hendrie, 2000).

3.3 Illegal trade

China: Many CITES-listed species have been observed in south China food markets; it is most likely that these were imported into China illegally, particularly Appendix-I species such as *Batagur baska* (Lau and Shi, 2000). Many non-CITES species in Chinese food markets have likely also been imported illegally, attesting to the documented illegal exports from other countries such as Myanmar and Viet Nam. Japan: No information on illegal trade of this species in Japan was available. Viet Nam: Hendrie (2000) observed this species in the wildlife trade on a few occasions and there has been only one observation of *M. mutica* in the Hanoi domestic pet market.

3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

China: If the burgeoning trade is left uncontrolled, it will pose negative impacts on the populations of turtles in China and Southeast Asia (Chen et al., 2000). Japan: No information was available on trade impacts to the Yellow Pond Turtle in Japan. Viet Nam: Potential trade impacts to *M. mutica* include extirpation of wild populations and the comprised viability of surviving populations (Hendrie, 2000).

3.5 Captive breeding for commercial purposes (outside country of origin)

China: There is a trend for the importation of captive-bred species, including *M. mutica*, which has the potential to meet the demand from the pet trade but is far from adequate to satisfy the demands of the food trade (Lau et al., 2000).

4. Conservation and Management

4.1 Legal status

4.1.1 National

China: Several freshwater turtles and tortoises are listed in the People's Republic of China Wild Animals Protection Law are state major protected wildlife grade I, while others are grade II protected (van Dijk, 2002). However, the Yellow Pond Turtle is neither grade I or grade II. The Wild Animals Protection Law also covers important economic and scientific species, though the actual species are not listed. For terrestrial species, the State Forestry Administration is responsible for the administering and enforcing of this law, while the Fisheries Ministry is responsible for the aquatic species (van Dijk, 2002). The collecting of state major protected species is only allowed for scientific research, captive breeding, exhibition and other special reasons. Permission from the Forestry or Fisheries bureau in the central government is needed for the collecting of grade I protected species; permission from the Forestry or Fisheries Department in the provincial government is required for grade II protected species (van Dijk, 2002). The transport of state major protected species across county boundary needs the permission from the provincial Forestry or Fisheries Department. The import and export of these state major protected species and CITES-listed species need the permission from the Forestry or Fisheries bureau in the central government and a certificate issued by the Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Import and Export Administrative Office (Shi and Lau, 2000 cited in van Dijk, 2002)). Regarding imports and exports of turtles, China has tightened regulations considerably in recent years (van Dijk, 2002). Notice of Strengthening the Live Reptile Import and Export Management (China CITES Authority No.[2000] 51) was issued by the State Endangered Species Import and Export Administration Office in June 2000 (van Dijk, 2002). This was augmented by Notice of Strengthening the Trade Management on Turtles and Tortoises, issued by the State Endangered Species Import and Export Administration Office on June, 17, 2001 (van Dijk, 2002). Under these Notifications, commercial imports of turtle species listed on Appendix II of CITES are only accepted from Parties that set an annual export quota, all commercial

imports of all turtles from Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand are suspended, all imports of turtles into China need to be accompanied by export permits or certificates from the exporting country, turtle imports are restricted to a small number of designated airports, and local wildlife authorities are instructed to co-operate closely with customs authorities (van Dijk, 2002).

Japan: There is no detailed information currently available on the legal protection status of *Mauremys mutica* (van Dijk, 2002). Japan has been a Party to CITES since 1980.

Viet Nam: Ministerial decree No 18 of the Council of Ministers Stipulating the Categories of rare and precious forest fauna and flora, and their management and protection, dated 17 January 1992, includes two species of non-marine turtles, *Indotestudo elongata* and *Pelochelys bibroni* (= *P. cantorii*), under category II. Thus utilisation of these two species is restricted to scientific research, establishing breeding populations, and international exchange. Any such activities require a collection permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Hendrie, 2000). The list of species protected by Decree 18 is currently under review and more turtle species may be included. Directive 359 (1996) restricts trade in wildlife and animal parts, including prohibiting the sale of wildlife in restaurants. Commerce and trade regulations require a permit issued at the provincial level for trade in any commodity, including wildlife (Hendrie, 2000). Circular 62/2001/TT-BNN issued on 05 of June 2001 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to guide imports and exports of goods and commodities managed by the Ministry for the period of 2001-2005 stipulates that Viet Nam prohibits exports of all wild animals and rare and precious plants. Thus export of all native turtle species is prohibited. Viet Nam became a Party to CITES in 1994.

4.1.2 International

The Yellow Pond Turtle is not currently listed in the CITES appendices.

4.2 Species management

4.2.1 Population monitoring

No specific population monitoring programs for this species, or for Asian freshwater turtles in general, have been identified.

4.2.2 Habitat conservation

Viet Nam: There are 11 National Parks and 91 Protected Areas designated in Viet Nam which cover 13,425 km² or 4.1% of the country (MacKinnon, 1997 as cited in Hendrie, 2000).

4.2.3 Management measures

Viet Nam: A Turtle Conservation and Ecology Project was established in 1998 by the Cuc Phong National Park and the Forest Protection Department that was aimed at receiving and translocating turtles confiscated from the wildlife trade, conducting research, public education, and training of regional authorities (Hendrie, 2000).

4.3 Control measures

4.3.1 International trade

China: China has recently taken several legal/regulatory measures to control imports and exports of freshwater turtles (see Section 4.1.1). Viet Nam: Viet Nam recently adopted CITES-implementing legislation, which should help control international trade.

4.3.2 Domestic measures

Viet Nam: The National Forest Protection Department is increasing enforcement activities on the ground and investing in the training of its rangers however, the process is slow and unlikely to achieve the results that are needed to meet the threat posed by the illegal wildlife trade (Hendrie, 2000).

5. Information on Similar Species

No information was available on similar species.

6. Other Comments

The species' status on the IUCN 2000 Red List is: Endangered (A1cd+ 2cd).

All range countries were consulted by mail regarding this proposal.

The consensus recommendation from the CITES-sponsored Technical Workshop on Conservation of and Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises, held in Kunming, China from March 25-28, 2002, is that *Mauremys mutica* is one of the 11 highest-priority taxa for an Appendix-II CITES listing at COP 12.

7. Additional Remarks

Anders G. J. Rhodin of the Chelonian Research Foundation has recommended that *Mauremys mutica* be considered for listing in Appendix II.

8. References

- Hendrie, Douglas B. 2000. Status and Conservation of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles in Viet Nam. Pp. 63-73 in Asian Turtle Trade: Proceedings of a Workshop on Conservation and Trade of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia (van Dijk, Stuart & Rhodin, eds.). Chelonian Research Monographs, Number 2.
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- Rhodin, G.J. 2002. Conservation and Trade of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia: Review of Status and Threats Using IUCN Red List and CITES Criteria. Report and Presentation presented at the Technical workshop on conservation of and trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises in Asia, Kunming, Yunnan Province (People's Republic of China), 25 – 28 March 2002.
- van Dijk, Peter Paul. 2002. The Legal Status of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles In Asia. Report and Presentation presented at the Technical workshop on conservation of and trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises in Asia, Kunming, Yunnan Province (People's Republic of China), 25 – 28 March 2002.
- Yasukawa, Y., Hirayama, R., and Hikida, T. 2001. Phylogenetic relationships of geomydine turtles (Reptilia: Bataguridae). *Current Herpetology (Japan)* 20(2):105-133.