



Asian Turtle Program, PO Box 179, Office # 1101, Hacisco Tower, Ngo 107, Nguyen Chi Thanh, Hanoi. Tel.: +84(04)37737858
26th August 2009

An awareness and research conservation program for Swinhoe's Soft-shell turtle in Vietnam.

Social Assessment (including Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework) for CEPF

1. Background

The activities proposed in this application focus on the Swinhoe's Soft-shell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*). A species widely recognised as one of the most highly threatened chelonian species in the world. With wild populations on the brink of extinction it is very unlikely that any communities will be impacted through in any way for a number of reasons. Not least that the species is now so rare, with only four animals currently known in existence, that the likelihood of catching a *Rafetus swinhoei* is extremely rare.

Activities proposed here fall within three principal categories, surveys, site based monitoring and awareness. The surveys will be interview based throughout the possible range for *Rafetus* in northern Vietnam, following major river systems. As such some surveys will be conducted in provinces such as Lao Cai or Yen Bai which do have indigenous communities. However surveys will be for information gathering only and have no enforcement or habitat management component which could limit access to resource.

The site based monitoring will be undertaken at Dong Mo Lake in Son Tay District, Ha Tay Hanoi. Most of the awareness activities will also focus on this site as the only known wild location for the species. No indigenous people occur at the site. Existing management of the lake under joint private ownership already prohibit the capture of the *Rafetus* by supervised fishing teams. In addition to this existing fishing practises have not caught the turtles and as such no additional restrictions are required.

Awareness will mostly be focused around Dong Mo Lake with community meetings, signboards and poster development. Awareness posters will also be distributed throughout the possible *Rafetus* range.

2. Identifying Indigenous Peoples in the project areas

No indigenous people are present at the principal Dong Mo Lake site where community patrols are established. In some provinces indigenous communities maybe present and will be identified through research of available literature and obtained from People's committee where possible. In addition during interview surveys new questionnaires will be used which collect social information including ethnicity. As activities at all locations other than Dong Mo Lake are purely survey focused there is no risk of adverse effects to local indigenous populations.

3. Impact assessment

The Dong Mo Lake site does not have indigenous Peoples in neighbouring communities or utilizing the lake and no changes are proposed to existing lake management or fishing methods. While all other areas visited under the project will be for survey purposes only, as such these activities will have no impact on indigenous peoples.

4. Free, prior and informed consultations with affected communities

Although no indigenous communities occur in the area surrounding Dong Mo Lake community meetings will still be held in the area. During community meetings information will be



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presented on the activities at the lake and the importance of *Rafetus* conservation in the area. Community members will be invited to share their ideas and thoughts on the project during these meetings.

5. Measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits

These activities will not be required as no indigenous people are present in the communities affected.