



COMMUNIQUÉ

TURTLE SURVIVAL ALLIANCE

AN IUCN PARTNERSHIP NETWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FRESHWATER TURTLES AND TORTOISES

Turtle Husbandry and Veterinary Care Workshop

Sponsored by the Singapore Zoological Gardens and The Turtle Survival Alliance

The **Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA)** in conjunction with the **Singapore Zoological Gardens** conducted a turtle husbandry and veterinary care workshop March 29 through April 1, 2004. About 45 people from eleven countries participated. Nations represented included Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the US. Represented were professors, veterinarians, wildlife center staff, graduate students, zoo personnel, field researchers, animal rescue center staff, aquarium personnel, and wildlife sanctuary wardens.

Instructors were Bill Holmstrom (Collection Manager of the Wildlife Conservation Society's -WCS- Herpetology Department), Doug Hendrie (Asian Turtle Coordinator for Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and WCS), Dwight Lawson (General Curator of Zoo Atlanta), Hugh Quinn (General Curator of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo), and Chris Tabaka (Veterinarian at the Detroit Zoological Institute). Topics



Chris Tabaka, Detroit Zoological Institute Veterinarian, examines a turtle with workshop participants

discussed included the TSA, the Asian turtle crisis, species identification, individual turtle identification techniques, record keeping, turtle nutrition, triage, shipping, temporary holding, disposition of confiscated turtles, and small population management.



Zoo Atlanta's Dwight Lawson discusses sexing turtles with workshop delegates

Instruction was given through PowerPoint presentations and hands-on work utilizing the Singapore Zoo's living and deceased collection. As a spin-off of the workshop, a *Batagur* working group was formed to help coordinate conservation efforts for that critically endangered species. The budding veterinary working group for Asian turtles was also strengthened.

Participants evaluated the course by commenting on what topics should be kept, dropped, enhanced, and added. This information is important, as the course will be offered again in 2005 at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden in Hong Kong, targeting participants from China.

Building the capacity for turtle conservation in range countries is one of the primary goals of the TSA. The Singapore training workshop is an excellent example of how we can achieve this, empowering an enthusiastic cadre of turtle practitioners with the skills and tools and to save turtles. Our challenge now is to be able to provide them with the resources – facilities, supplies, logistical support – to be successful.

Increasingly the TSA is becoming recognized as a global force for turtle conservation, and increasingly we are called on to help support range country conservation efforts. To meet these demands we will need to step up our fund-raising efforts considerably. The struggle to save turtles will be won or lost in the range country, and at least for now in SE Asia, the TSA’s global network has expanded to meet this challenge.



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