



TURTLE SURVIVAL ALLIANCE

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

Thursday, July 3, 2008 - TSA Update

>>> Rafetus update from China - message from Rick Hudson

Gerald Kuchling arrived back in China and on 23 June excavated the nesting area where China Girl had been observed digging. A clutch of 45 eggs was excavated, 32 of which went into three incubators, the rest left in the sand for natural incubation. Four days later Gerald closely examined the eggs for development and reports that "17 show clear sign of development (clear round white patches, larger at higher temperatures), five with possible white patches, and 10 with no sign of development. Thus, 53%-68% of eggs have started to develop." And the female continues to come up on the beach and explore, leading to hopes that she will soon nest again.

With hatching expected in 50 - 70 days, and with egg laying estimated during the first week of June, we could have hatchlings by early August. Our next step is to get hatchling rearing units set up with adequate filtration, temperature control and lighting before then. The TSA has also hired a young Chinese American grad student, Emily King, to be stationed at the Suzhou Zoo for the next two months. Emily's job will be to monitor egg incubation and husbandry, and to communicate her observations to us.

We have a new donor to the Rafetus project - long time supporter the British Chelonia Group. They have offered to cover the cost of the three Lyon incubators and shipping costs, total \$1,800 US. The TSA is also being asked to host the two Directors of the Suzhou and Changsha Zoo at the TSA conference in order to celebrate this historic event, and to build capacity for the long term future of this project. If anyone has a surplus of frequent flyer miles that can help with this request, or if you want to help support this effort, please let us know.

That's all for now, have a safe and happy 4th of July holiday.





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