

Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle

Cuora trifasciata

Reptile

Scientific Name

Cuora trifasciata

Other Names

Asian Three-striped Box Turtle, Golden Coin Turtle

Range

Southern China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Laos

Habitat

Evergreen forest waterways

Description

A medium sized turtle with a uniform dark brown shell with three darker stripes running the length from head to tail. The pointed head and jawline are bright yellow to olive green and the limbs are a pinkish orange underneath and olive green on top.

Average Size

Length: 7 – 9 in.

Weight: 300 – 400 g.

Lifespan

In the wild: Unknown

In captivity: Estimated at 50 years

Diet

In the wild: Worms, crustaceans, insects, vegetation and fruit

In captivity: Insects, worms and a prepared fruit and vegetable mix

Incubation

80 – 85 days

Sexual Maturity

Estimated at 8 – 10 years of age

Clutch Size

2 – 6 eggs

Predators

Crocodiles, birds of prey and humans

Population Status

Critically Endangered



Behavior

The Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle is considered both aquatic and terrestrial and seems equally adept in both environments. Captive individuals are frequently observed basking and appear quite terrestrial, so this species probably spends a significant amount of time on land in the wild. Primarily diurnal (active in the daytime), this is a shy, reclusive species that won't hesitate to conceal itself with its shell or jump into the water to make a hasty retreat from predators.

Reproduction and Breeding

There is not a lot of concrete information about the wild mating habits of this species. From observations made in captive populations, courtship occurs throughout the year, with a peak in spring. Mating is violent with males fighting for access to nearby females and aggressively approaching them. Nesting usually occurs in May, with females laying their eggs in a burrow covered with soil and vegetation and providing no further parental care. The hatchlings are precocial, born with all the skills and abilities necessary for immediate survival, and must quickly make their way to the water for protection.

Conservation

This species of turtle is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and is listed on Appendix II of CITES (Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species), which gives it some protection from hunting and collection for the pet trade.

Turtles and tortoises across Southeast Asia have undergone massive declines in recent years due to overexploitation for food markets. Although they have been hunted by local people for subsistence for centuries, recent changes in Asian economics have opened up direct access to foreign markets where turtles and tortoises are prized for their meat and perceived medicinal value. The Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle in particular has suffered because of recent claims that its plastron contains medicinal properties that can cure cancer. This has driven up the demand and therefore price, bringing this species to the edge of extinction. In 2001, China began a program for the conservation of flora and fauna that established many new nature reserves, some of which offer habitats for tortoises and freshwater turtles. For more information on this species and the conservation work being done in its habitat, please go to the Asian Turtle Conservation Network at www.asianturtlenetwork.org.



Sacramento Zoological Society
3930 West Land Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95822
T: 916-808-5888 F: 916-264-5887 E: info@saczoo.org

www.saczoo.org

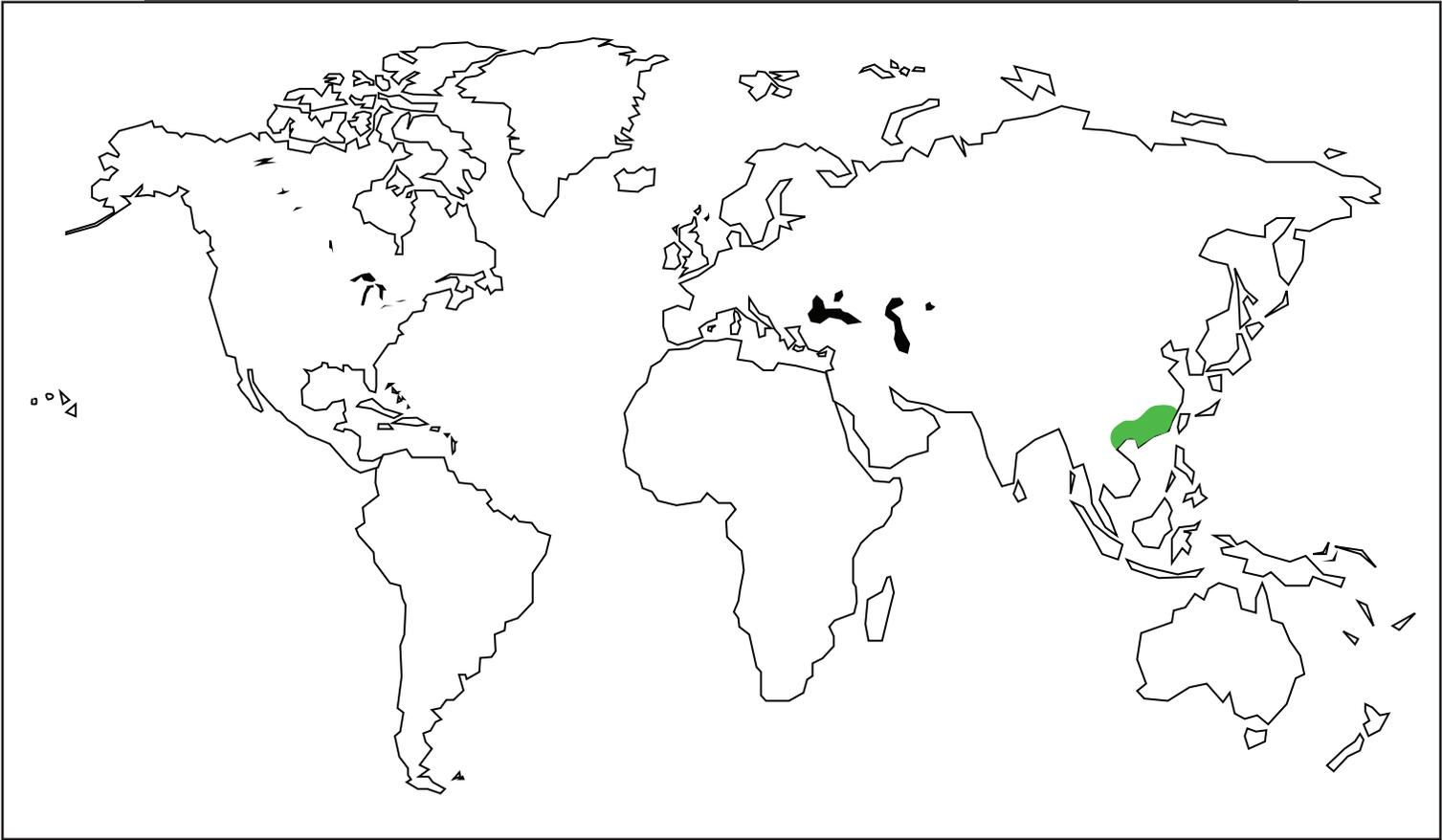
Amazing Facts

This species lives at high altitudes of up to 1,400 feet above sea level.

The plastron (the bottom shell) of this turtle is hinged, which allows the turtle to conceal its tail, head and limbs by closing the shell when disturbed.

This is one of the more colorful aquatic turtles.

Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle



Sacramento Zoological Society
3930 West Land Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95822
T: 916-808-5888 F: 916-264-5887 E: info@saczoo.org

www.saczoo.org