

**Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni hermanni*)
Studbook Report 2003**



Photo: L. Woldring

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Appendix I . Studbook data

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1. General information

The Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) is one of the most common kept species of tortoises. It occurs in several southern European countries. Two subspecies are generally accepted. This studbook deals with the more rare subspecies: *Testudo hermanni hermanni*

This subspecies occurs in southern France, northeastern Spain, northwest, west and southern mainland Italy, Sardinia, Sicily, a few small islands on the Italian west coast, the Balearic Islands and Corsica. (Ballasina, 1995)

This small subspecies rarely grows over 20 cm in length (Ballasina, 1995) but most individuals remain smaller not exceeding 16,5 cm in females and 14 cm in males. (Ernst, Altenburg and Barbour, 2000) This subspecies has a high domed carapax, brightly colored with contrasting areas of yellow and black and usually has a bright yellow spot behind the eye. The plastral markings of this subspecies are characteristically formed of two almost solid dark bands running longitudinally down the plastron. (Ernst, Altenburg and Barbour, 2000). Morphological differences between populations are present especially between the mainland and island populations. (Ballasina, 1995) (Internet 1, 2003)

This subspecies inhabits typical Mediterranean oak forests, dry meadows (macchia), arid scrub hillsides, rocky slopes and margins of farmland. (Ernst, Altenburg and Barbour, 2000)



Open Mediterranean oak forest, typical habitat of T.h.h. Photo: L. Woldring
Parco delle Madonie, Sicily.

The survival of this subspecies in the wild is at risk. It is listed as Endangered category B1 en 2 (A-E) in the IUCN red species list. Main threats are fragmentation and loss of habitat due to tourism activities, agriculture and bushfires. Also the introduction of wild boar from Eastern Europe for hunting purposes has a dramatic impact on the survival rate of eggs and hatchlings in Tuscany. (Illegal) over collecting in the past and probably still at present had also caused depletion of many populations especially in southern Italy. A concern is also the introduction of escaped/ released pet tortoises often not belonging to the local form or even subspecies, which can cause pollution of the local genotype.

Several initiatives have been raised in order to preserve this subspecies from extinction by breeding and reintroduction programs. (SOPTOM France, CARAPAX Italy, Son Cifre De Baix Mallorca)
The Hermann's tortoise is listed in Appendix 2 of CITES, Appendix A within the European Union. and is protected in all countries of origin by national and regional law.

2. Introduction and activities 2003

The year 2003 has been a successful year for the studbook. Four new locations were added to the studbook. Finally all animals were registered in a studbook program.

Two announcements were published in order to find new participants for the studbook.

One in the journal of the Dutch Turtle and Tortoise society, Trionyx 1 (3) 2003. And also one was published in Minor 2 (4) 2003, the journal of the AG- Schiltkröten, part of the German herpetological society (DGHT). Unfortunately only one reaction was received from a German keeper. Contacts were made through the Internet with Italian keepers of this subspecies.

3. Population

At the moment the current studbook population consists of 54 animals.

These are 10 males, 17 females and 27 animals of unknown sex. (10.17.27)

Unfortunately there are only two breeding nuclei within the studbook. One in the Netherlands and one in Germany. At least in the Netherlands two more breeding nuclei that are not registered to the studbook are known. In Germany several more not participating breeding nuclei are present.

Most animals within the studbook are captive bred juveniles. Several of these animals are bred from non-registered animals. This means that several bloodlines are present in the studbook although the breeding bloodlines are reduced to two nuclei. Relations within one of these nuclei is not exactly clear, as several potential fathers are present within the breeding group.

In the studbook, animals from several geographical origins are registered. There are strong clues that morphological differences between sub-populations do exist. This is not a strange fact considering the fragmentation of the populations in the wild.

One of the goals of the E.S.F. and of this studbook is to maintain captive populations as natural as possible. Within this studbook breeding advice will be giving, in order to mate the most compatible animals.

4. Locations

The animals are kept at 6 locations, five in the Netherlands and one in Germany.

All locations are private keepers.

5. Births

Seven animals were bred in 2003 at two locations.

Five animals were bred at location 2 and 2 animals at location 3.

6. Imports

No imports are reported.

7. Deaths

No deaths are reported

8. Transfers

Several transfers took place in 2003.

Studbook numbers 38, 39 and 40 moved from location 3 to location 1.

The numbers 50, 51, 52 and 53 moved from outside the studbook in to the studbook at location 1.

9. Future actions

One of the actions for this year will be to find more participants for the studbook. In the Netherlands the remaining non-registered participants will be contacted in order to convince them to participate.

Also in Germany several keepers are known and those will be contacted.

In France and Italy participants will be sought. In May at least two possible participants will be visited in Italy. Studbook registration form will be taken along in order to register animals.

In September the annual meeting of the Italian turtle club will be held. Possibly I will go there and try to find participants.

Especially in Italy there are people who keep animals from known origin. I would like to import some captive bred juveniles in order to increase genetic variation within the studbook. Several studbook participants have given notice of their interest in one or two animals. The problem is that the Italian CITES authorities do not function very well and it is not easy to obtain the necessary CITES certificates within a reasonable period of time.

Another future goal will be to do a research on the (possible) morphological differences between populations. Both in- and ex-situ animals will be examined. Lot of speculation is going on about this topic, but very little scientific articles are published.

Probably in July some fieldwork will be done in Tuscany, Italy.

This will be a long term project.

10. Conclusion

Although this studbook just started, in my opinion it is very promising.

Several studbook participants are very active and accurate in their data.

I think the fact that *Testudo hermanni hermanni* is kept only in small numbers in the Netherlands and is relatively difficult to come by, makes it easier to maintain a well functioning studbook as only a few participants are there. One of my goals is to maintain this studbook relatively small and well functioning by selecting on serious participants.

Unfortunately breeding results were not that great last year. This can be partly explained by the fact that captive bred non-breeding juveniles cover the majority of the studbook population. I think in the near future more breeding results will be gained.

I think the status in the wild makes it absolutely worthwhile to breed this attractive subspecies in a coordinate way. You never know if our efforts can make the difference in the future.

Literature:

-Ballasina, D., *Distribuzione e situazione delle tartarughe terrestri in Italia*, 1995 in Red Data Book on Mediterranean Chelonians, first edition, D. Ballasina, Edagricole, Bologna.

-Ernst, C.H., & Altenburg, R.G.M. & Barbour, R.W., 2000, *Turtles of the world*, ETI Amsterdam, CD-rom.

-Internet:

1. Some differences in morphology between Greek, Italian and Corsican tortoise populations, 9-10-2003, R.E. Willemsen, Doetichem, The Netherlands: <http://www.ahailey.f9.co.uk/ronald.htm>

Testudo hermanni hermanni

Reptilia / Testudines / Testudinidae
 Studbook Compiled by: L. A. Woldring

Loc = Current location

Outside = Location of non studbook participant

ID	Location	Date	Local ID	Event	Breeder	Sex	Hatch	Sire	Dam
1	Outside 1 Loc 1	~01-07-95 15-08-99	Th02	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Female	~01-07-95	UNK	UNK
2	Loc 3 Loc 1	08-09-86 13-04-03	81 Th05	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Female	08-08-86	UNK	15
3	UNKNOWN Loc 2	~01-07-99 ~03-08-99		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Female	~01-07-99	UNK	UNK
4	WILD Loc 2	~01-07-83 ~19-07-97		Wild Caught Transfer		Female	~01-07-83	WILD	WILD
5	UNKNOWN Loc 2	~01-07-87 ~07-03-98		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Female	~01-07-87	UNK	UNK
6	UNKNOWN Loc 2	~01-07-99 ~03-08-99		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Male	~01-07-99	UNK	UNK
7	Loc 2	~10-10-03	JONG 1	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	10-10-03	6	4
8	Loc 2	~12-10-03	JONG 2	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	12-10-03	6	4
9	Loc 2	~21-12-03		Hatch/Birth		Unknown	21-12-03	6	4
10	Loc 2	~26-12-03		Hatch/Birth		Unknown	26-12-03	6	4
11	Loc 2	27-12-03		Hatch/Birth		Unknown	27-12-03	6	4
12	WILD Outside 2 Loc 3	~01-01-70 ~01-01-71 09-10-71	12	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Male	~01-07-63	WILD	WILD
13	WILD Outside 3 Loc 3	~01-01-74 ~01-01-75 19-08-76	23	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Male	~01-07-71	WILD	WILD
14	WILD Outside 4 Loc 3	~01-01-66 ~01-01-67 20-07-68	5	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Female	~01-07-61	WILD	WILD
15	WILD Outside 5 Loc 3	~01-01-68 ~01-01-69 ~01-04-70	9	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Female	~01-07-60	WILD	WILD
16	WILD Outside 6 Loc 3	~01-01-69 ~01-01-70 14-07-71	11	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Female	~01-07-65	WILD	WILD
17	WILD Outside 7 Loc 3	~01-01-71 ~01-01-72 24-06-73	14	Wild Caught Transfer Transfer		Female	~01-07-68	WILD	WILD
18	Loc 3	07-09-86	78	Hatch/Birth		Female	07-09-86	MULT 1	15
19	Loc 3	19-08-88	95	Hatch/Birth		Male	19-08-88	MULT 1	16
20	Loc 3	20-08-88	102	Hatch/Birth		Female	20-08-88	MULT 1	17
21	Loc 3	10-08-92	144	Hatch/Birth		Female	10-08-92	MULT 1	UNK
22	Loc 3	12-08-93	161	Hatch/Birth		Male	12-08-93	MULT 1	17
23	Loc 3	22-08-96	211	Hatch/Birth		Female	22-08-96	MULT 1	15
24	Loc 3	01-09-96	216	Hatch/Birth		Female	~01-09-96	MULT 1	UNK

25	Loc 3	14-09-96	217	Hatch/Birth		Male	14-09-96	MULT 1	UNK
26	Loc 3	13-08-99	223	Hatch/Birth		Female	13-08-99	MULT 1	17
27	Loc 3	13-08-99	224	Hatch/Birth		Female	13-08-99	MULT 1	17
28	Loc 3	13-08-99	225	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	13-08-99	MULT 1	17
29	Loc 3	27-08-99	229	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	27-08-99	MULT 1	15
30	Loc 3	28-08-99	231	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	28-08-99	MULT 1	15
31	Loc 3	29-08-99	232	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	29-08-99	MULT 1	15
32	Loc 3	15-08-02	244	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	15-08-02	MULT 1	16
33	Loc 3	15-08-02	245	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	15-08-98	MULT 1	16
34	Loc 3	17-08-02	246	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	17-08-02	MULT 1	16
35	Loc 3	30-08-02	249	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	30-08-02	MULT 1	14
36	Loc 3	02-08-03	252	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	02-08-03	MULT 1	14
37	Loc 3	05-08-03	253	Hatch/Birth		Unknown	05-08-03	MULT 1	14
38	Loc 3 Loc 1	13-08-99 13-04-03	226 Th06	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Male	13-08-99	MULT 1	17
39	Loc 3 Loc 1	20-08-00 13-04-03	102 Th07	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	07-08-00	MULT 1	17
40	Loc 3 Loc 1	10-08-00 13-04-03	239 Th08	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	10-08-00	MULT 1	17
41	Outside 8 Loc 4	~01-08-99 ~01-02-00		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Male	~01-08-99	UNK	UNK
42	Outside 8 Loc 4	~01-08-00 ~01-02-00		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	~01-08-99	UNK	UNK
43	Outside 8 Loc 4	~01-08-99 ~01-02-00		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	~01-08-99	UNK	UNK
44	Outside 8 Loc 4	~01-08-99 ~01-02-00		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	~01-08-99	UNK	UNK
45	Loc 5	08-01-01		Transfer		Male	~01-07-90	WILD	WILD
46	Outside 9 Loc 5	~01-08-00 20-02-01		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	~01-08-00	UNK	UNK
47	Outside 10 Loc 5	08-08-02 18-08-02		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	08-08-02	UNK	UNK
48	Outside 10 Loc 5	08-08-02 18-08-02		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	08-08-02	UNK	UNK
49	Outside 10 Loc 1	29-07-03 05-11-03	Th09	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	29-07-03	UNK	UNK
50	Outside 10 Loc 1	29-07-03 05-11-03	Th10	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	29-07-03	UNK	UNK
51	Outside 10 Loc 1	02-08-03 05-11-03	Th11	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	02-08-03	UNK	UNK
52	Outside 10 Loc 1	02-08-03 05-11-03	Th12	Hatch/Birth Transfer		Unknown	02-08-03	UNK	UNK
53	Outside 9 Loc 6	25-08-02 02-09-02		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Male	25-08-02	UNK	UNK
54	Outside 9 Loc 6	25-08-02 02-09-02		Hatch/Birth Transfer		Female	25-08-02	UNK	UNK