

Studbook breeding programme

Agrionemys horsfieldii (Central Asian tortoise)



Photo by Brian L.

Annual report 2009

Sjef Ramaekers studbook keeper



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1. Introduction

Agrionemys horsfieldii is a popular and one of the most kept tortoise in captivity. It's sometimes seen as a rather easy to keep tortoise which is unfortunately not true. The species has been imported since decades in large numbers. Many of these animals die within a couple of years due to bad housing conditions and diseases.

2. Studbook population

In total 105 animals are kept (129 in 2007, 93 in 2008). It concerns 33 males, 47 females and 25 with (still) unknown sexe.

3. Locations

The species is kept at 24 locations (30 in 2007), all in the Netherlands.

4. Birth

Breeding results of *Agrionemys horsfieldii* are improving the recent years. This is probably due to the fact that more and more imported young animals get mature. From 4 (6 in 2007, 8 in 2008)) locations breeding results have been reported but without specific information like number of hatchlings, clutches etc..The young animals are not automatically registered in the studbook.

5. Imports

The species is still imported in rather large numbers. The countries of central Asia in particular Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the main supplies of the horsfieldii tortoises to the international trade. From Uzbekistan some "ranche activities" are known. Adult animals are harvested in the wild. Juveniles obtained from these wild taken animals are considered F1 specimans and get exported mainly to Europe, US and Japan.

6. Death

Sadly enough each year tortoises still die. Most animals died

shortly after waking up from hibernation. One of the reasons can be that the animals are kept in too moist hibernation conditions.

7. Discussion

The number of in animals in the studbook is decreasing due to a decreasing number of locations keeping *Agrionemys horsfieldii* and an ongoing mortality of animals directly after hibernation. Too moist hibernation conditions could be due to this. Members of this studbook who decided to stop keeping *A. horsfieldii*, sell their animals without informing the studbookkeeper or the other participants of the studbook.

Because of this many animals get lost for the studbook. Sadly enough in most cases its considers wild hatched animals. These animals have genetically a high value for the studbook, much more than the nowadays imported farm bred tortoises.

At new locations most of the time new imported tortoises are kept which are probably farm bred animals .

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