

# Studbook Breeding Programme

## *Shinisaurus crocodilurus*

(Chinese crocodile lizard)



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Shinisaurus crocodilurus

Photo by G.Stelzner/M.Zollweg

## Annual Report 2015

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**E**uropean  
**S**tudbook  
**F**oundation

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### **1. Introduction**

The studbook for *Shinisaurus crocodilurus* was re-established last year.

Potential members had been approached and round about 25 participants could be won to participate in the studbook incl. private keepers and zoos.

Especially in situ research activities determined the activities of the Studbook in the past three years. The studbook keeper visited the Chinese habitats for the 6 time in 2015 and was able to form a network of “experts” rel. to *Shinisaurus* within the studbook- ”cosmos” and external resources such as the Biological Faculty of Guilin Normal University / China or the Daguishan Nature Reserve / China.

However, problems with the studbook software in 2015 still remains and some data of participants got lost and hence the activities within the studbook unfortunately remain on a relatively low level. However, a new software will be installed 2016. So I hope to leave the logistical problems behind us and keep everybody updated as much as possible. I will keep all participants updated rel. to the forthcoming transfer of their relevant data.

Unfortunately the *Shinisaurus* -community lost Siebren Kuperus caused by a tragically accident. We all will miss him. It will be hard to compensate this loss.

### **2. Wild status**

The situation of *Shinisaurus* still remains critical. The species is currently listed as “endangered” in the IUCN Red List.

Efforts had been made to improve the current situation for *Shinisaurus* in China in some habitats, however, for other habitats in China new studies (2014, WU, Guangxi Normal University, by verbal information) acknowledge the over - all risk for extinction in China.

However, the Daguishan Nature Reserve was “upgraded “ in its status and is now a National Nature Reserve. As a consequence more public attention and more funds are expected to support

### **3. Captive population**

This species is currently listed in CITES appendix II. In practical sense this means that the now regulated trade means no longer allows wild animals to be imported for commercial trade, and rightfully so. As with many species this effectively means that the current captive population is all there is to maintain a viable ex situ population.

Several private individuals as well as zoos have applied for offspring bred within the studbook. The latter especially are a great help to form a solid, long lasting base for the studbook population. So Zoo Helsinki reported in 2015 their first breeding success with animals obtained some years ago from the Studbook. Congratulations !

#### 4. Births

An important factor within a studbook is breeding. It appears breeding is not a big problem anymore, there are however a lot of reports of neonates dying in the first hours or weeks of their life. This issue has been addressed first within a herpetological book covering the breeding and keeping of *Shinisaurus* and a recommendation was made to change the raising conditions and to establish serious medical care. The reactions from participants indicate, that the survival rate increased due to the change of the environment.

Overall the total number of neonates could not seriously be published due to the lack of exact numbers, however, due to the information available at least 25 neonates can be reported.

#### 5. Activities

Apart from contact with a lot of zoos and private keepers individual activities worth mentioning are the following in situ activities:

I have visited the Chinese habitats in 2015 again. Together with the help of ZGAP (Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations ( [www.ZGAP.de](http://www.ZGAP.de) ) the breeding- and research project had been established now. In the last three years a breeding station has been built (65 tanks, pretty close to the habitats, under governmental protection) and some habitats became protected areas (by lease of the respective areas). 125 juveniles can be reported now for 2015.



Rare picture of wild *Shinisaurus* habitat, animals could still be found here.

Photos by M. Zollweg





Breeding station within Daguishan National Nature Reserve

Photo by M. Zollweg

Moreover, in August 2015 the ReHerp Foundation was formally established and registered at the Rotterdam Chamber of Commerce. The ReHerp Foundation will focus on conservation and recovery of threatened reptile and amphibian species. Not just in writing but in practical projects and clear results. Henk Zwartepoorte, former curator Reptiles and Amphibians at the Rotterdam Zoo, chairman of the European Studbook Foundation and former chairman of the Dutch and Belgium Turtle and Tortoise Society and Chris Peters, former educator at the Rotterdam Zoo are now forming the present ReHerp Foundation board respectively as chairman and secretary. One of the target species is *Shinisaurus*. Goal is to establish a relationship with the foundation to support the protection of the species and captive breeding activities.

## 6. Activities to come

- Transfer the studbook data to a software-based database
- Approach established participants and motivate potential participants to register their specimens, controlled exchange of specimens.
- In the following year I will attempt to further shape the studbook database. A lot of bloodlines are represented (at least four within my possession and some other keepers), although for most specimens their exact lineage back to founder animals is hard to find.
- I keep looking for old WC or known F1 specimens and contemplating the option to obtain F1 offspring from impounded USA/ Asia specimens.

- In Situ activities: Visit of the Chinese habitats in August 2016.
- A relationship should be established to the aforementioned Re-Herp foundation.

## 7. Literature:

Huang, C. M., Yu, H., Wu, Z. J., Li, Y. B., Wei, F. W. & Gong, M. H., 2008. Population and conservation strategies for the Chinese crocodile lizard (*Shinisaurus crocodilurus*) in China. *Animal Biodiversity and Conservation*, 31.2: 63–70.

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