

Studbook breeding programme

Heosemys spinosa

(Spiny Hill turtle)



Photo by Henk Zwartepoorte

Annual report 2011

Martin van Wees, studbook keeper

Henk Zwartepoorte, co- studbook keeper



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1. Introduction:

The ESF studbook/breeding program for the Spiny Hill Turtle is not an independent pure ESF studbook. After the confiscation of a large shipment of several Asian freshwater turtle species in 2001 the European Association for Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) decided to initiate European Studbooks (ESB) for the imported species. About 350 specimens of *Heosemys spinosa* were imported into Europe and sent to a number of EAZA institutions and to a number of ESF turtle keepers. See also the link at point 10. In order to concentrate on one studbook the private recipients were included into the EAZA ESB to be coordinated by the Lisbon Zoo. Since 2002 until 2007 a regular studbook and annual report was published by Lisbon zoo curator reptiles Eric Ruivo and from 2008 until 2011 by Patricia Vilarinho. Shortly after the inclusion of the ESF recipients it was agreed on close cooperation between the EAZA ESB and ESF. The undersigned took the position of ESF studbook coordinator and liaison for ESF.

2. Studbook population:

The EAZA ESB historical list 2011 shows 139.185.75 (399) specimens including the ESF animals. Significant phenomenon is that the ISIS website just shows 26.34.16 (76) specimens kept at 23 locations. This difference can find its cause in the fact that many of the 2002 imported animals died in between but also can be caused by improper or not reporting to ISIS by EAZA institutions. Comparing the different annual overviews in the 2011 ESB report it can be seen that indeed large numbers have died during the past decade.

The actual living ESB-population at December 31, 2010 was 40.52.23 (115) specimens. A very disappointing conclusion that so many animals died since the arrival in 2002.

By ESF- participants at present 24 specimens are kept.

3. Locations:

The ESB 2011 annual report reports 25 locations in the 2010 overview in various EU countries. The participants list however shows 22 participants. This difference can be caused by the not mentioning the private ESF-participants. At present (situation at the end of 2011) the species is kept at 6 ESF-locations in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

4. Births:

No births have been reported within the ESF-studbook population. Worth to note here however is the birth of 17 animals by the Jersey Zoo/Durrell Conservation Trust between 2004 and 2011. Three of the 2008 hatchlings were transferred to an ESF-participant. The remaining 2009,2010 and 2011 born animals went to several EAZA institutions and a few were kept at the Jersey Zoo.

5. Imports:

No imports during 2011 have been reported.

6. Deaths:

The communication (read email exchange) with the Lisbon Zoo was very sparse at first and ended up completely since last year. So exact numbers of deaths can not be given here. However of the 2007 TSA Europe shipment of 31 specimens that all went to ESF-participants the surviving rate is very low. 19 specimens died over the past 5 years. The surviving 12 animals are kept at 5 locations.

7. Transfers:

Several transfers were carried out between the ESF-participants.

8. Discussions:

The species still shows difficulties in management in captivity both in zoos and at ESF-locations.

Apart from the results at the Jersey Zoo no births are reported by ESF-keepers although at 3 locations eggs are laid.

Of the 19 deaths of the 2007 shipment of just a few autopsies were carried out. This is a very unwanted situation, although sometimes the moment of death is very sudden making a quick autopsy impossible or very difficult. At this place we would like to emphasize the importance of proper autopsies once more in order to obtain a proper pictures of causes of death making it possible to adjust/improve husbandry.

The options for cooperation with the EAZA ESB will be kept fully open certainly now since the studbook is taken over by Telma Araujo (curator reptiles

at the Lisbon Zoo). This in particular is important since between EAZA and ESF a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) is signed in order to promote and stimulate cooperation between both organisations but also to encourage participation in the mutual studbooks/breeding programs.

Anyway the decision is made by both the ESF studbook keeper and co studbook keeper to enter all ESF animals in a separate ESF studbook. The ESB studbook keeper will be asked to remove the private animals from the ESB-studbook.

At this place we would once more want to stress the importance of proper record keeping and proper informing the studbook keepers. This proved to be of great value in relation to recent controlling by the Dutch Inspection Services of the 2010 and 2011 TSA imports in the Rotterdam Zoo TSA administration.

9. Activities planned for 2012:

- 9.1. Complete the photo archive of all ESF-studbook specimens.
- 9.2. Entering the ESF specimens into a separate Sparks software program.
- 9.3 Development and drafting of husbandry and breeding guidelines.

10. References:

The 2011 EAZA ESB studbook and annual report can be found at this link:

http://www.eaza.net/member_area/TAGs/Reptile/Shared%20Documents/2011%20Spiny%20hill%20turtle%20studbook.pdf
