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Lettre n°20

SOMMAIRE

| | |
|--|----------------|
| EDITORIAL | page 2 |
| EDITOR'S CORNER | page 3 |
| INCENDIE DANS LE TARN, « COMMERCE ANIMALIER, COMMERCE MEURTRIER ! »..... | page 4 |
| ESPECES INVASIVES ET LEGISLATION EUROPEENNE ET « WHO'S THAT BOY ? »..... | page 5 |
| REVUE ALLEMANDE INTERNATIONALE ET QUESTION DE ROLAND..... | page 6 |
| NOTICE NECROLOGIQUE DE TATIANA I. KOTENKO D'AMPHIBIA-REPTILIA | pages 7 et 8 |
| EXTINCT" GALAPAGOS TORTOISE REAPPEARS | page 9 |
| PUBLICITY | page 10 |
| SNAPPING TURTLE IN URBAN LANDSCAPE AND SOME READING..... | page 11 |
| NEW ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE SPECIES ANNOUNCED..... | page 12 |
| INFO ASPAS : DECLASSEMENT DU LOUP POUR LA CHASSE LOISIR..... | pages 13 et 14 |
| EDITORIAL POLICY | page 15 |

EDITORIAL: Justice à la française... Unépais bandeau sur les yeux...**Chers collègues et amis,**

Fort peu d'associations de protection de la nature en France s'engagent finalement, avec succès devant les tribunaux... D'abord parce qu'elles dépendent des subventions de fonctionnement que leur versent ceux qui bien souvent détruisent l'environnement et pour une autre raison essentielle, que les moyens juridiques (ou textes d'applications de lois bien vagues et générales) qui permettraient de défendre la nature, n'existent pas.

Exemple: j'anime depuis plus de 20 ans une association locale d'environnement. Notre maire, en décembre 2011, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, signe un permis de démolir, d'un vieux moulin au bord de l'Yvette, rivière qui traverse notre ville, Longjumeau, et qui, d'après le bulletin municipal, aurait pu abriter des chauves-souris. Nous allons la voir en janvier 2012, pour lui dire : « Maintenant que vous êtes Ministre de l'Environnement en exercice, pour l'exemple, il serait judicieux de faire une étude d'impact pour vérifier s'il y en a ou pas », elle nous répond « Vous avez raison » et attends que la requête soit déposée au TA, pour la réaliser un mois après. « Maintenant que l'étude montre qu'il n'y a pas de chauves-souris dans le Moulin, vous retirez votre requête nous demande sa 1^{ère} adjointe ? » Sauf que l'étude montre qu'il y en avait plein le square, trois espèces de chiroptères, concernées par un projet global, la démolition du Moulin en étant la première étape. Nous maintenons notre requête, vu les menaces qui pèsent sur leur habitat, le second inventaire recommandant de ne point toucher à leur zone de vie et de chasse, les grands arbres (35 ont été abattus depuis, sur les 95 du square, pas de mesures compensatoires, les chauves-souris aujourd'hui ont en partie disparues...).

Que conclue le Tribunal administratif de Versailles « qu'en l'espèce, alors qu'aucune disposition législative ou réglementaire n'imposait qu'une étude d'impact soit jointe à la demande de permis, l'association requérante ne justifie pas que le principe de précaution a été méconnu en se bornant à soutenir que la demande de permis n'était pas accompagnée d'une étude d'impact du projet sur les chauves-souris ». L'étude d'impact pour tout projet d'urbanisme ou autres (on parlait ici de « renaturation » des berges de l'Yvette...) est donc facultative... La loi est bien faite, on a eu droit à quelques études faites par le syndicat de rivière pour ce projet de « renaturation » sur des espèces piscicoles et végétales d'intérêt médiocre (poissons chat), mais aucune sur reptiles, amphibiens, insectes, oiseaux, mammifères (chauves-souris), grands arbres... Espèces menacées par le projet, exclues d'avance d'une bien hypothétique « renaturation »...

Ce grand vide juridique et réglementaire est bien sûr voulu. Lorsque avec Jean Servan, nous avons présenté le premier dossier pour l'arrêt de l'importation des tortues de « Floride » au Ministère de l'Environnement, Jacques Wintergust, directeur du service « faune-flore » et son adjoint Vincent Bentata, ont défendu les importateurs. J'ai cru longtemps qu'ils se faisaient l'avocat du diable. J'ai depuis, remis les pieds sur terre. La réalité est que les lobbies nichent dans ce ministère, leur habitat, devenu totalement hermétique à la protection de l'environnement. On nous promène entre autre, avec les Plans Nationaux d'Action, pour mieux détruire, à l'occasion, des milieux naturels remarquables signalés dans ces plans, obstacles aux aménageurs pour lesquels, on déroule le tapis rouge...

Dans la lutte sociale, les syndicats qui reçoivent l'essentiel de leurs financements de leurs cotisants, combattent pied à pied contre la remise en cause des droits des travailleurs, leurs statuts, leurs conquêtes sociales, leurs revendications : grèves, manifestations, pétitions, tribunaux du travail... EC considère que les dispositions législatives et réglementaires sont au cœur des problèmes de conservation. Les athéniens du Vème avant JC considéraient que les lois étaient les murailles de leur société, de leur civilisation. Ne pas les revendiquer, chercher à les obtenir, les faire appliquer, revient à laisser les ennemis de l'environnement faire la loi, et nous condamner à constater, à regretter les dégâts, impuissants. Bonne lecture !

Alain Veysset, éditeur.

EDITOR'S CORNER: French justice... A thick blind-fold...

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In France, very few associations of nature preservation have seized the court with success. First, because they are dependent on the functioning budget subsidized by local and regional institutions which occasionally destroyed the environment and for another essential reason, the legal procedures to protect nature don't exist as laws are too vague and too general for practical implementation.

For example, I am working for now more than twenty years in a local association for environment preservation. Our mayor in December 2011, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, signed a permit so that an old mill should be demolished. It was situated along the Yvette River which passes through our town Longjumeau. As explained in the municipal bulletin this mill may have sheltered some bats. We had an appointment in January 2012 and we told her: "You are now Minister of Environment on duty, to set an example, it should be judicious to have an impact study to verify if the bats are in the mill or not." She answered: "Yes, I agree!" We waited for our petition to be registered to the administrative judge and received the answer one month later. "This study shows now that there is no bats in the mill, would you please cancel your petition?" asked the first assistant of the mayor. In reality, the study showed that there were plenty of bats in the public garden: three different species of chiropters affected by a global project of demolition. And the mill was the first step. We maintained our petition because of the threats on their habitat: the second inventory advising not to cut the big trees, their hunting and life territory. Since then, 35 big trees were felled on the 95 in the public garden, no compensatory measures, the bats have partly disappeared.

The conclusions of the administrative court of Versailles are: "In this case as there is no legal disposal or regulation to impose an impact study to a request of a demolition permit, the applicant association does not justify that the principle of precaution hasn't been taken into account. It restricts itself to support that the request for this permit did not come with the impact study on bats". So an impact study for all towns planning project or others is optional. It was said in this case: a "renaturalization" project of the Banks of the Yvette River will be processed... The law is well applied: we had the right to some studies made by the river associations for the "renaturalization" on minor piscicultural and vegetal species (like catfishes) but none on reptilians, amphibians, insects, birds, mammals (bats), great trees... Species threatened by the project which are excluded in advance from a very hypothetical "renaturalization"...

This great legal emptiness is of course made on purpose. When, with Jean Servan, we presented the first file to stop importation of red-eared turtles to the French Ministry of Environment, Jacques Wintergust directory of the department "Faun-Flora" and his first assistant Vincent Bentata defended the importers. I thought during a long time that they played the devil's advocate. Since, my feet have to be back on the ground. The reality is that lobbies have their entries in this Ministry becoming completely hermetic to the protection of the environment. We are not heard and the Ministry lies to us with National Action Plans. It destroys on occasions the remarkable natural areas indicated on these plans. The Ministry unwinds then the red carpet to the promoters ...

In social fighting, the trade unions received the most part of their financing from their subscribers. They fight step by step the questioning of the workers'rights, they stand for their statutes, their social conquests, their claims, they use strikes, demonstrations, petitions, labour courts... EC considers that legal and regulating disposals are at the heart of conservation problems. Athenians in the 5th century BC considered that laws were the great walls of their city, their civilization. If we don't try to demand them, to obtain them, to apply them, the enemies of our environment will rule with the law on their side and force us to evaluate and regret the damage, powerless. Enjoy reading!

Alain Veysset, editor.

Incendie dans le Tarn, le 20 avril dernier, des milliers de reptiles et tortues tués...

Le feu s'est déclaré dans un entrepôt qui appartient à l'un des principaux grossistes de vente de reptiles et tortues en France. L'origine du sinistre n'est pas encore connue.

réagir



Les pompiers durant l'opération de sauvetage dans l'entrepôt, samedi soir. (Remy Gabalda - AFP)

L'entrepôt d'un des deux principaux grossistes de vente de reptiles et autres tortues en France, la société Savannah à Saint-Sulpice-La-Pointe, dans le Tarn, a été ravagé dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche par un incendie.

Selon les pompiers du Tarn, le sinistre a débuté dimanche vers 2 heures et a détruit quelque 4.000 m² d'entrepôt qui abritait de très nombreux spécimens de pythons, iguanes, tortues etc. Seules quelques tortues ont pu être sauvées.

Dimanche en début d'après-midi, les sapeurs-pompiers étaient encore affairés à éteindre complètement le sinistre, avec l'appui de quatre camions. De la fumée blanche s'échappait toujours de l'entrepôt en grande partie détruit et dont la structure a fondu, en périphérie de cette commune située à mi-parcours entre Toulouse et Albi.

"C'est un cauchemar"

"Toutes les hypothèses sont ouvertes" quant à l'origine du sinistre, a indiqué la gendarmerie du Tarn. "Huit tortues d'environ 60 kilos chacune ont pu être sauvées par les pompiers (...) Mais il y a des milliers d'animaux qui sont morts. Des iguanes, des lézards, des tortues. C'est un cauchemar", a réagi par téléphone le PDG de cette société créée en 1999, Romain Julian.

Romain Julian est le fondateur et le PDG de Savannah et de Reptile Planet, deux sociétés "complètement imbriquées" qui constituent l'un des deux principaux acteurs de ce marché en France: Savannah fournit ainsi 600 magasins et animaleries. Elle propose également le matériel et l'alimentation nécessaires à l'élevage de ces animaux de compagnie un peu particuliers, comme des souris congelées pour les pythons par exemple.

Selon lui, "16 à 20 personnes en comptant les apprentis" travaillent dans cette entreprise, dont le site internet a été "mis en maintenance" dès le sinistre connu pour éviter que des clients potentiels ne puissent passer commande. Les enquêteurs travaillent désormais à pied d'oeuvre pour identifier l'origine du sinistre.

European Parliament adopts legislation to tackle invasive alien species at EU level

4/16/14 IUCN-NewsEuropean

The European Parliament today adopted legislative plans to prevent the introduction and manage the spread in the EU of invasive alien species (IAS) of plants, animals or insects that cause ecological and economic damage. The legislation aims to tackle the threat through better, more coordinated action by member states, and provides for a ban on species declared to be of "Union concern".

"This new regulation is an important step towards strengthened action to protect the EU against the devastating impacts of invasive alien species on its biodiversity and economy. Among other positive elements, we welcome the removal of the cap of 50 species of EU concern. On the other hand, the negotiated outcome has not met all of IUCN's asks, such as the full inclusion of species that are native in some parts of Europe and invasive in others, and remaining openings for derogations," said Luc Bas, Director of IUCN's Brussels office. "The challenge now is implementation and IUCN looks forward to providing scientific expertise through our broad network in the coming years."

The parliamentary report also insists on the establishment of a dedicated scientific forum to advise on the scientific aspects of enforcing the new rules, a move welcomed by IUCN. "The scientific community has long called for a more science-based approach to tackle invasive alien species in Europe, and we thus welcome EP's strong stance on establishing a scientific forum," said Piero Genovesi, Chair IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group and Senior Scientist at ISPRA. "Also, the design of the regulation is very much in line with the decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on invasive species, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which IUCN considers key tools for halting the global biodiversity loss."

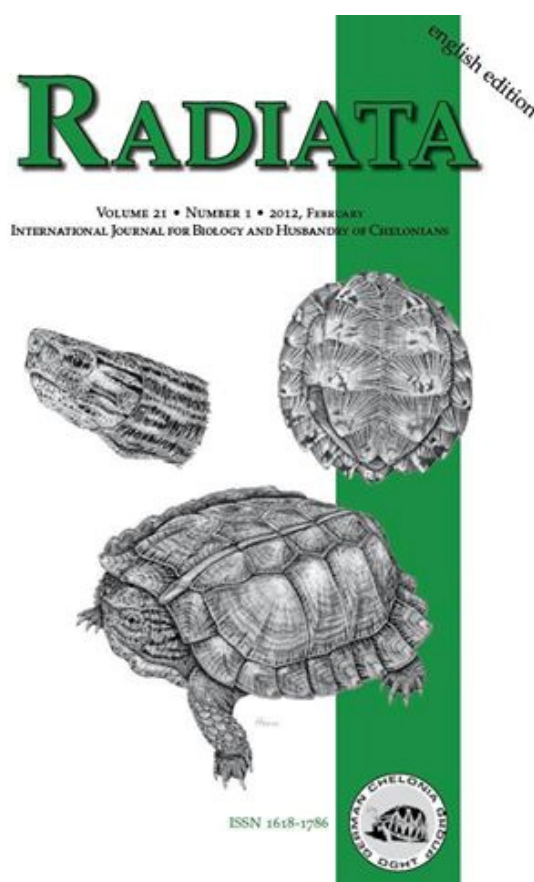
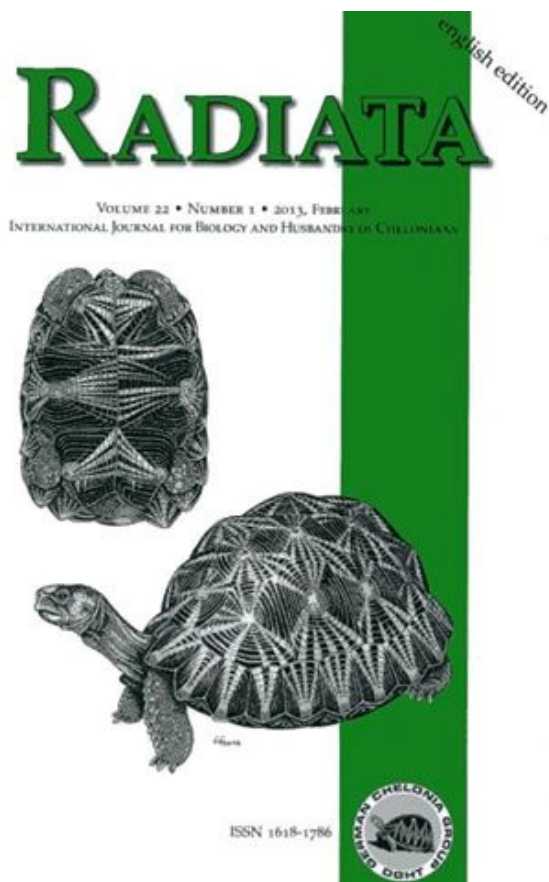
According to the European Commission, invasive alien species are a major and growing cause of biodiversity loss and species extinction. They can cause health problems, damage infrastructure and facilities, hamper forestry or cause agricultural losses. Invasive species are estimated to cost the Union at least € 12 billion per year.

The draft legislation is already informally agreed with EU ministers and is scheduled to be formally adopted by Member States in May. It would require EU member states to ascertain the routes of introduction and spread of invasive alien species and set up surveillance systems and action plans. Official checks at EU borders would also be stepped up. For widespread invasive alien species, member states would have to draw up management plans.

"Efforts to minimise the impact of invasive alien species will now be coherent across the EU member states and there will be better co-ordination, which means that the overall effectiveness will be improved. Early warning and rapid response systems will help the member states to reduce the costs and further prevent the negative impacts related to new invasions," said MEP Pavel Poc, author of the parliamentary report.



C'était, pour nos amis corses qui le connaissent bien, Thomas Vaucouleur, jeune naturaliste déjà et alors chevelu !



FOR SALE-BACK ISSUES OF RADIATA -(In English) OFFER ONLY GOOD IN THE THE U.S. (2002-2013)RADIATA IS THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR BIOLOGY AND HUSBANDRY AND CONSERVATION PUBLISHED BY THE GERMAN CHELONIAN GROUPTHE FOLLOWING ARE THE BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF AVAILABLE ISSUES OF RADIATA

Salut Alain,

j'espère que tu te portes bien.

Nous avons reçu en saisie une vingtaine de cistudes qui ont une drôle de "bouille" : plastron sans lmarque ou quasi, "piquetage" clair voire blanc...

Nous avons fait des prélèvements pour détermination de la sous espèce.

Pour compléter ma culture générale en la matière, aurais-tu une clé de détermination des différentes sous espèces ou tout document intéressant ce sujet.

Amitiés

Roland SIMON

Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Directeur Réserve de la Haute Touche 36290 Obterre

C'est une bonne question que je vous lance à tous et qui se pose à tout gestionnaire ?

OBITUARY: TATIANA I. KOTENKO, 1949-2013 AMPHIBIA-REPTILIA 34 (2013): 433-435



On the 2nd of March, after almost two years of struggling with the consequences of a severe car accident in Jordan, we have lost an outstanding Ukrainian herpetologist: Tatiana I. Kotenko (née Sitko). She passed away in the time when she was at the peak of her professional carrier, with numerous running projects and full of ideas for further studies. Tatiana was born on October 14, 1949 in Kiev, in the family of the musician Ivan Sitko, music editor of state radio Elena Vasilchenko.

Her lifelong interest in animals arose already during the school years, and she was a young naturalist in the Kiev Zoo. In 1967 she became a student of Biological Faculty of Kiev University. She graduated from the University with honorary award in 1972 and defended her diploma thesis "Habitat-related morphometric variation in the sand lizard". After a few months working as laboratory assistant in Kiev University in 1972, she got a Ph.D. fellowship at the Institute of Zoology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev and studied ecology, morphological variation and distribution of reptiles of the left-bank steppe of Ukraine. This study was supervised by two prominent Ukrainian zoologists, Prof. Mikhail Voynstvensky and Prof. Nikolay Shcherbak. In 1975 she wrote her first scientific paper devoted to diurnal cycle of activity of *Eremias arguta deserti* (Sitko, 1975). After finishing her fellowship, she worked 1976-1978 as a teacher at Kiev University. She led seminars on evolution and general zoology, gave practical lessons, and supervised research by students. In January 1979, she became a research scientist in the Department of Population Ecology and Conservation of Vertebrates in the Institute of Zoology of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and has been working there until 2013. In May 1983 she defended her Ph.D. thesis "Reptiles of the Left-Bank Steppe of Ukraine". Her Ph.D. thesis volume included 550 manuscript pages, with the amount of material being much

OBITUARY: TATIANA I. KOTENKO, 1949-2013 AMPHIBIA-REPTILIA 34 (2013): 433-435

beyond the requirement for a doctoral thesis. In the same year she was awarded by the Steering Com- © Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2013. DOI:10.1163/15685381-00002919 434 Obituary mittee of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for a series of publications resulting from her Ph.D. study. A part of this comprehensive research was devoted to the lizard *Eremias arguta* and summarized in th monograph “The Steppe runner” edited by Nikolay Shcherbak (1993; Tatiana was the single author of eight chapters and co-author of further six chapters). For many years the main field of her research was the ecology of all reptiles inhabiting the steppe zone of Ukraine. For some of these species, the steppe runner, the steppe viper, as well as the sand lizard and the pond turtle, which were of particular interest for her, she also investigated the variation in life-history and external morphology, intraspecific systematics, distribution, etc. Being an outstanding expert for basic research in zoology, Tatiana also did a lot for nature protection. She participated in developing the national web of protected areas, contributed prominently to all editions of the Red Data Book of Ukraine and an inventory of rare species of reptiles in Ukraine, and organized practical actions to protect steppes. She was a member of the editorial board of the Vestnik Zoologii (the main zoological journal in Ukraine), an expert of the IUCN, and a member of many nature conservation and zoological societies. Every year, she spent the whole spring and autumn in the field, usually alone, sometimes accompanied by a few colleagues or students. She has stopped this activity neither at severe times after the collapse of the Soviet Union nor in the last years of her life when she experienced increasing health problems and was overloaded by writing numerous scientific papers and by official duties in the Institute. This brave woman travelled alone across the whole southern Ukraine, lowland Crimea and adjacent regions making dozens kilometres per day, using all kind of transport; she stayed overnight in a tent or in houses of local people who were inspired by her enthusiasm and dedication to science. There has remained virtually no place in her study area where she did not spend at least a couple of days. She went kayaking most of rivers in Left-Bank Ukraine, visited the majority of remaining steppe patches in Ukraine. Nobody could stand along with her ability working day and night under harsh field circumstances. Good command in English, social competence and high standards of research made her the main representative of Ukraine at numerous international meetings and projects which linked the post-Soviet Ukrainian science with the international scientific community. In the early 1990s, she was the coordinator of the World Bank project “Conservation of biodiversity in the Danube delta” in Romania and Ukraine; this study contributed substantially to the establishment of the Danube biosphere reserve in the Ukrainian part of the delta. Later on she participated in numerous bilateral Ukrainian-European projects (inventory of steppe territories in the Crimea, assessment of the current state of herpetofauna in the Sivash area, impact of amelioration on the fauna of southern Ukraine, as well as in numerous studies on the variability and intraspecific taxonomy of reptiles and amphibians in Ukraine and adjacent regions). She attended the first and the third World Congresses of Herpetology, nearly all meetings of the Societas Europaea Herpetologica, of the Nikolsky Herpetological Society, the Ukrainian Herpetological Society, the symposia on European pond turtles, on the biology of vipers, various workshops and seminars, often being there the only participant from Ukraine. The list of her publications encompasses more than 200 titles, including nine monographs and six popular books written in three languages (Russian, English and Ukrainian).

Acknowledgements. We thank Volodymyr Peskov, Irina Dotsenko, Katerina and Anatoly Kotenko for providing useful information and literature and Uwe Fritz for critical notes and style corrections. Our deepest sympathy for the loss to all the relatives, friends and colleagues. Obituary 435

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By Jennifer Welsh January 9, 2012 1:41 PM, Yahoo News

After 150 years of being "extinct," a species of giant tortoise may be on the verge of a comeback tour, scientists report today (Jan. 9).

The researchers "found" the lost species, called *Chelonoidis elephantopus*, by analyzing the genome of a closely related species, *Chelonoidis becki*, which lives on Isabela Island, the largest of the Galápagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The island lies about 200 miles (322 kilometers) from Floreana Island, where *C. elephantopus* was last spotted before disappearing, likely due to hunting by whalers, some 150 years ago.

The two species of gigantic tortoise, both living in the Galápagos Islands (famously studied by Charles Darwin), have different shaped shells. The shells of *C. elephantopus* on Floreana Island were saddle-shaped while tortoises on other islands, including *C. becki*, had domed-shaped shells. These giant tortoises can weigh nearly 900 pounds (408 kilograms) and reach almost 6 feet (1.8 meters) in length.

The researchers noticed in 2008 that some of the *C. becki* shells were more saddle shaped than domed shaped, and found that these were hybrid offspring from matings between the two species. They took samples for genetic analyses from 1,669 of the large tortoises on the island, about 20 percent of their population.

They found some snippets of the *C. elephantopus* genome in the population, and using a special computer model they analyzed how recently these genes would have entered the population. This would have happened when a living *C. elephantopus* mated with a *C. becki* — and is indirect proof that at that time living *C. elephantopus* existed.

They found that 84 of the tortoises had genetic indicators that one of their parents was a *C. elephantopus*, 30 of which were less than 15 years of age. Given the 100-year lifespan of the tortoises the researchers say there is a good chance that their *C. elephantopus* parent would still be alive.

"To our knowledge, this is the first report of the rediscovery of a species by way of tracking the genetic footprints left in the genomes of its hybrid offspring," study researcher Ryan Garrick, who performed the work at Yale University, but is now assistant professor at the University of Mississippi, said in a statement. "These findings breathe new life into the conservation prospects for members of this flagship group."

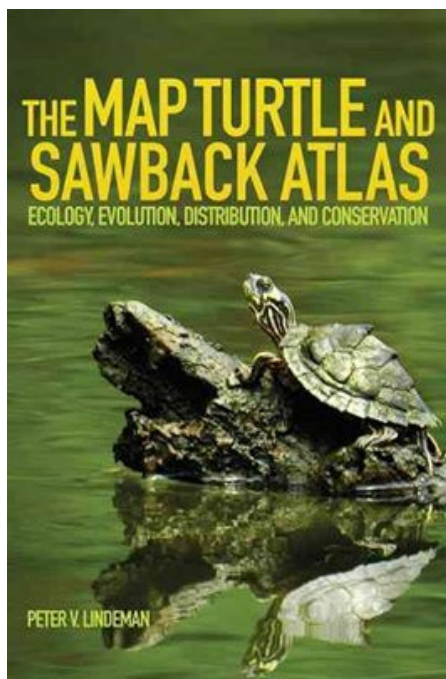
Because of genetic differences between the hybrid tortoises, the researchers estimate that at least 38 *C. elephantopus* left behind hybrid descendants on the Galápagos Islands, and many may still be alive.

If the researchers can find this hidden population, they could capture individuals to set up a breeding program to regenerate the species, the authors write in the paper published Jan. 9 in the journal *Current Biology*. They could even try to resuscitate the species from the genetic snippets found in *C. becki*.

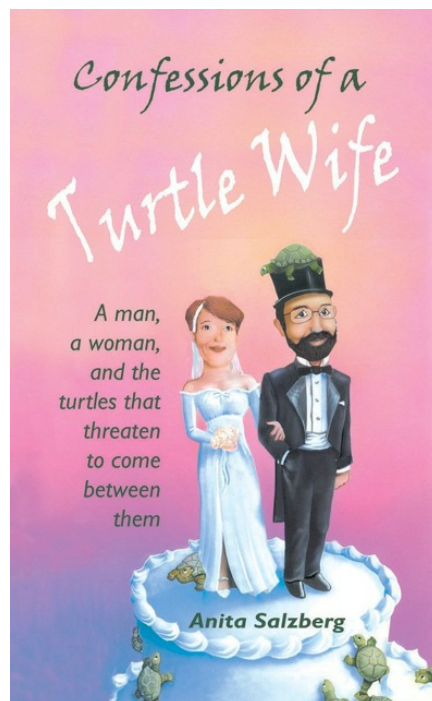
"This is not just an academic exercise," study researcher Gisella Caccone, of Yale University, said in a statement. "If we can find these individuals, we can restore them to their island of origin. This is important as these animals are keystone species playing a crucial role in maintaining the ecological integrity of the island communities."

In an interesting twist, the researchers aren't sure how the giant tortoises would have gotten from Floreana Island to Isabela — they suggest the animals may have been brought to Isabela as food and then either thrown overboard or left on the shore.

PUBLICITY



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For more information and how to order go to <http://www.herpdigest.org/books.html>



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Abstract

In order to effectively manage urban habitats, it is important to incorporate the spatial ecology and habitat use of the species utilizing them. Our previous studies have shown that the distribution of upland habitats surrounding a highly urbanized wetland habitat, the Central Canal (Indianapolis, IN, USA) influences the distribution of map turtles (*Graptemys geographica*) and red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) during both the active season and hibernation. In this study we detail the movements and habitat use of another prominent member of the Central Canal turtle assemblage, the common snapping turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*. We find the same major upland habitat associations for *C. serpentina* as for *G. geographica* and *T. scripta*, despite major differences in their activity (e.g., *C. serpentina* do not regularly engage in aerial basking). These results reinforce the importance of recognizing the connection between aquatic and surrounding terrestrial habitats, especially in urban ecosystems.

BACK IN STOCK--The Map Turtle and Sawback Atlas: Ecology, Evolution, Distribution, and Conservation, by Peter V. Lindeman- Autographed

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New Alligator Snapping Turtle Species Announced, Some Face Localized Risks

April 14, 2014

for redOrbit.com – Your Universe Online

A new [study](#) published in the journal *Zootaxa* reveals that the [alligator snapping turtle](#) is actually three different species – not one as previously thought.

The [report](#) also indicated that the localized distribution of these species, which includes coastal rivers of the northern Gulf of Mexico, poses a significant threat to their continued survival.

“We have to be especially careful with our management of the Suwannee River species because this turtle exists only in that river and its tributaries,” said study author Travis Thomas, a [Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission](#) scientist, referring to a small river that winds through parts of Georgia and Florida. “If something catastrophic were to occur, such as a chemical spill or something that affects the entire river, it could potentially devastate this species. The turtle is extremely limited by its habitat. All it has is this river and it has nowhere else to go.”

Based on analyses of the fossil record and modern turtle morphology, study researchers revised the genus *Macrochelys* to include *Macrochelys temminckii* and the two newly-described species, *Macrochelys apalachicola* and *Macrochelys suwanniensis*. Constrained to river systems that empty into the northern Gulf of Mexico, the species are split by geography, which triggered changes in genetics, according to the study team.

“*M. temminckii* is found in river drainages such as the Mississippi and Mobile, while *M. apalachicola* is confined to the Apalachicola and other Panhandle rivers,” explained study author [Kenneth Krysko](#), a herpetologist with the Florida Museum. “There are no alligator snapping turtles in the seven rivers between the Suwannee and Ochlockonee (Aucilla, Econfinia, Fenholloway, Saint Marks, Steinhatchee, Wacissa and Wakulla). This gap creates a geographic isolation that has likely resulted in the Suwannee species being the most genetically and morphologically distinct of the three *Macrochelys* lineages.”

Surveys of the Suwannee River during the last three years have indicated *M. suwanniensis* populations are greater than previously imagined. However, the species’ success continues to be an issue because of its restricted range, according to the researchers.

To reach their conclusion, the scientists reviewed the fossil record, which reaches back 15 to 16 million years. They discovered morphological and genetic distinctions among the three species. Specific distinctions were noted in the carapace, or shell, which can be readily detected in both living and fossil examples.

“The western group (*M. temminckii*) is morphologically more primitive, but genetics testing suggests that the Suwannee snapper has a deeper divergence,” said study author [Jason Bourque](#), a vertebrate paleontologist with the Florida Museum of Natural History. “When alligator snappers show up in the fossil record, they look a lot like modern alligator snappers. They do not start showing up in the fossil record until the early Miocene, but snapping turtles as a group go back to the late [Cretaceous](#).”

Sometimes referred to as the “dinosaurs of the turtle world,” alligator snapping turtles can grow to 200 pounds and live almost 100 years. As apex predators, these turtles play a crucial role in their ecosystem, Thomas said.

The researchers said they hoped their work would inform efforts to maintain these turtles and their river ecosystems.

EDITORIAL, suite... Projet de décret du Ministère de l'Environnement, déclassement du loup qui entrerait dans la chasse loisir...

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Consultations publiques - Urgent

Exprimez-vous contre le projet d'arrêté faisant du loup une espèce chassable

La Ministre de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable et de l'Énergie consulte le public sur un projet d'arrêté qui permettrait aux chasseurs d'abattre des loups à l'occasion de leur loisir. Deux précédents projets d'arrêtés ont fixé à 36 le nombre de loups pouvant être abattus cette saison, et intégré 6 nouveaux départements dans lesquels les destructions de loups seront facilitées (20 départements au total). Le présent projet va encore plus loin et permet aux chasseurs **de chasser le loup** à l'occasion de leur battues ou chasses individuelles au grand gibier. Cet arrêté entend légaliser cette pratique mise en œuvre par les préfets cet automne, pourtant sanctionnée par le juge administratif à 14 reprises...



Le projet d'arrêté est consultable [ICI](#).

Vous pouvez participer directement sur le site en cliquant [ICI](#)

(formulaire à remplir en bas de la page)

ATTENTION : la consultation est ouverte jusqu'au 11 juillet 2014.

L'ASPAS vous invite vivement à exprimer votre opinion sur ce projet. Vous

trouvez ci-après quelques éléments critiques.

Nous sommes fermement opposés à ce projet, notamment pour les raisons suivantes :

- Le loup est classé à l'annexe IV de la directive Habitats. Il est à ce titre strictement protégé. Seules les espèces inscrites à l'annexe V peuvent faire l'objet de mesures de gestion et donc être chassées. Faire du loup une espèce « chassable » est totalement incompatible avec cette directive européenne.
- Il est inconcevable de laisser aux seuls chasseurs la responsabilité d'une opération de dérogation au statut de stricte protection d'une espèce dont les populations restent fragiles. Depuis le retour du loup, une vingtaine d'individus ont été braconnés par tir, sans bien sûr compter ceux qui n'ont probablement pas été retrouvés. Une telle opération doit impérativement être encadrée par l'État.
- Le CNPN (Conseil National de la Protection de la Nature), organisme dont la consultation est obligatoire, a émis un avis négatif sur ce projet.
- Une trentaine des communes concernées par ce projet sont des sites Natura 2000 ainsi désignés en raison de la nécessité de conserver le loup sur ces espaces. Permettre aux chasseurs de tirer le loup sur ces zones spéciales de conservation créées pour sa protection est totalement absurde et contradictoire.

Vous pouvez exprimer votre opinion en adaptant avec vos propres mots l'avis de l'ASPAS, s'il vous convient. Un avis personnalisé aura en effet plus de poids que plusieurs réponses à la consultation reprenant le même modèle, au mot près.

**Nous comptons sur votre mobilisation,
merci d'avance pour votre participation.**
Partagez cette information sur les réseaux sociaux [ICI](#)

L'équipe de l'ASPAS

Tout dysfonctionnement du site des consultations publiques n'est pas du fait de l'ASPAS. Nous vous invitons à renouveler ultérieurement votre participation en cas de message d'erreur, de problème de connexion ou de validation.

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