

Researchers find rare giant turtle in Vietnam

Researchers from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo have discovered a rare giant turtle in northern Vietnam – a find that carries great scientific and cultural significance.



— Swinhoe's soft-shell turtle was previously thought to be extinct in the wild before this one was discovered in northern Vietnam. AP

Researchers from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo have discovered a rare giant turtle in northern Vietnam – a find that carries great scientific and cultural significance. Swinhoe's soft-shell turtle was previously thought to be extinct in the wild. Three other turtles of the species are in captivity, said experts from the Zoo's Asian turtle program.

The discovery represents hope for the species, said Doug Hendrie, the Vietnam-based coordinator of the zoo program.

Turtle expert Peter Pritchard, president of the Chelonian Research Institute, confirmed the find based on a photo Hendrie showed him.

"It looked like pretty solid evidence. The animal has a pretty distinctive head," Pritchard said.

There have been rumors for years of a mythical creature living deep in the waters of a northern Vietnam lake. Some in a village west of Hanoi claimed to be blessed by catching a glimpse of its concave shell as it crested above the surface of their lake.

A national legend tells of a giant golden turtle that bestowed upon the Vietnamese people a magic sword and victory over Chinese invaders in the 16th century. Whether that sacred turtle has materialized in the 21st century will be a matter of cultural debate among the Vietnamese.

"This is one of those mythical species that people always talked about but no one ever saw," said Geoff Hall, zoo general curator.

Of the other three Swinhoe's soft-shell turtles in captivity, two are in Chinese zoos and the other is cared for in the Hoan Kiem ("Returned Sword") Lake in downtown Hanoi – the lake in which the legendary turtle appeared to reclaim the sword from the emperor.

Recommended



SPACE

Private mission to the moon won't land on lunar surface after malfunction



SPACE

NASA delays Artemis moon missions

Pritchard said an amateur photographed a Swinhoe's soft-shell turtle in southern China about six months ago that he believes was legitimate.

"It's on the very brink of extinction, so every one counts," Pritchard said.

The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo began its effort to preserve and protect Asian turtles in 2003 amid reports of increased killings for food or to make traditional medicine from their bones. Development and pollution also led to loss of nesting habitats along rivers, zoo officials said.

The zoo has put more than \$275,000 into Asian turtle conservation efforts since 2000 and has supported Hendrie since 2003, officials said.

His team and scientists from Education for Nature-Vietnam had searched lakes and wetlands along the Red River for three years before hearing about the creature living outside Hanoi.

The turtle remains in the lake and researchers have notified the Vietnamese government of its existence, Hendrie said.

Sponsored Stories

by Taboola

RIFION

s Weird Plug-In Device Makes Dusty Homes A Thing Of The Past

IKIN ANALYTICS

ing Nvidia in 2024? Wall Street Legend Issues Urgent A.I. Stock Warning

MI MD

p Covering Your Dark Spots With Makeup, Do This Instead

NCHESNCRUNCHES

s Drugstore Wrinkle Cream Sold Out At Target (In 2 Days)

SPONSORED / CLARIFION

This Weird Plug-In Device Makes Dusty Homes A Thing Of The Past

SPONSORED / GUNDRYMD

U.S Cardiologist Discovers Why You Get Tired Easily

Top US Doctor: Sugar Is Not The Problem (This Is)

SPONSORED / CHAIKIN ANALYTICS

Buying Nvidia in 2024? Wall Street Legend Issues Urgent A.I. Stock Warning

SPONSORED / MIAMI MD

Stop Covering Your Dark Spots With Makeup, Do This Instead

Dermatologist begs Americans to do this weird routine every morning if you have dark spots.

SPONSORED / WELLNESSGUIDE

Diabetes Is Not From Sweets! Meet The Number One Enemy

Top Surgeon: Anyone With Blood Sugar Over 100 Should Try This

SPONSORED / LIFETIPSJOURNAL

1 Odd Trick Restores Your Eyes To Perfect 20/20 Vision



[ABOUT](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[HELP](#)

[CAREERS](#)

[AD CHOICES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[YOUR PRIVACY CHOICES](#)

[CA NOTICE](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE \(UPDATED JULY 7, 2023\)](#)

[NBC NEWS SITEMAP](#)

[CLOSED CAPTIONING](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

[SELECT SHOPPING](#)

[SELECT PERSONAL FINANCE](#)

