

## CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
<b>Project Title:</b>	Confirming the existence of the Zhou's Box Turtle in Northern Vietnam and developing a conservation plan for the species
<b>Date of Report:</b>	November 30 <sup>th</sup> 2013
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Minh Le Email: minh.le.cres@gmail.com Phone/fax: 844-3-8262-932

**CEPF Region:** Indo-Burma

**Strategic Direction:** Strategic Direction 1. Safeguard priority globally threatened species in Indochina by mitigating major threats

**Grant Amount:** \$18,509

**Project Dates:** 1<sup>st</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

Cleveland Metropark Zoo's Asian Turtle Program (ATP): Scientific staff from ATP actively participated in all surveys from planning to conducting interviews and fieldwork. In total, CRES and ATP carried out two interview surveys in Tuyen Quang Province, one interview survey in Bac Can Province, and one field survey in Bac Can Province. The results of the surveys helped significantly improve the knowledge of this poorly known species.

Mr. Torsten Blanck (Member of IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group): Mr. Blanck provided technical advice during the whole course of the project. The photos and model (replica) of the Zhou's Box Turtle that he brought in facilitated the identification of this species during interview surveys. He also participated in the interviews and fieldwork in Bac Can Province.

### Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

The project helps identify potential habitat of the Zhou's Box Turtle, a CEPF priority species, and recommendations for further conservation actions for this species.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.***

The project has enhanced scientific knowledge of the targeted turtle species. Through this knowledge, priority research activities are recommended to better understand its natural range and habitat. Collaboration between related stakeholders working on conservation has been enhanced during the process of the project implementation with the research team gaining valuable experience in surveying the critically endangered species. These skills are essential for developing further survey activities for this species.

During the course of the project, we undertook three interview surveys, two in Tuyen Quang and one in Bac Can Province, and one field survey in Bac Can Province. In total, 190 interviews were conducted with more than 10 species being identified in the survey area. *Cuora zhoui* was

recognized by 25 interviewees in Tuyen Quang and Bac Can Provinces. Our field survey did not capture any turtles, probably because it was late in the season (October). However, we were able to identify good wetland areas, where this species potentially occur.

During our interview and field surveys, we are able to identify the presence of a number of high conservation priority species in Tuyen Quang and Bac Can Provinces, e.g., *Platysternon megacephalum*, *Cuora galbinifrons*, *Cuora mouhotii*, *Mauremys mutica*, and *Sacalia quadriocellata*. The data can help prioritize conservation efforts in the future for the threatened chelonian species.

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected:**

**Species Conserved:**

**Corridors Created:**

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

The project helps confirm the presence of a number of highly threatened turtle taxa in Tuyen Quang and Bac Can Provinces, and the threats that these species are facing. Although we have been able to collect crucial information on the targeted species, *Cuora zhoui*, more surveys need to be conducted to confirm the presence of this species. It is a challenging task because this species has never occurred in high abundance. Moreover, with extremely high pressure from hunting and its high economic value, it will take more time and effort to locate this species in its natural habitat.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)? NO***

## **Lessons Learned**

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

By planning intensive interview surveys in a broad area in Tuyen Quang and Bac Can Provinces, the project has been able to gather valuable information on this species. The results, in turn, help us prioritize field survey in Bac Can Province where good habitat for this species is still available.

***Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

**Shortcomings:**

Since the project only ran for eight months, all interview surveys had to be carried out in a short period of time. As a result, we were unable to identify the priority area for field survey earlier in the season when turtles were more active as initially planned. Early surveys would increase the probability of success significantly.

Changes in procedures used for permit application, especially for foreigners, to conduct surveys in protected areas delayed some project activities at the beginning. We resolved the issue by applying for survey permits earlier.

**Success:**

Through maintaining regular survey planning and discussion meetings between all team we were able to adapt activities throughout the project period to focus on priorities as they changed. This was particularly useful when it came to determining the field survey site for which our choice changed significantly from those proposed in the original proposal.

**Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:**

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

**Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund	B	\$4,200.00	
CRES	B	\$1,000.00	
ATP	B	1,000.00	

**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)
- B** Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- C** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

**Sustainability/Replicability**

**Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.**

Data obtained from this project will be used to update conservation status as well as legal status of the threatened turtle species nationally and internationally, and guide future more in-depth surveys of the Zhou’s Box Turtle in priority sites. As the reports of the project have been sent to related stakeholders, the results also help protected management authorities make informed decisions in protecting these species from current pressures. Methods and approaches used in this study can be replicated in other regions in Vietnam and other countries in the world.

**Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.**

**Safeguard Policy Assessment**

**Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.**

**Performance Tracking Report Addendum**

**CEPF Global Targets**

**(Enter Grant Term)**

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	NO			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	NO			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	NO			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	NO			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	NO			

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.**



Total																				
If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:																				

## **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

## **Information Sharing and CEPF Policy**

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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