

Project *Batagur baska* – Release 2019

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Project Objective and Activities

The current release project will help to draw conclusions on migration routes and survival of the critically endangered Northern River terrapin (*Batagur baska*) in their natural habitat. Five males were released in 2018 in the Sundarbans mangrove forest, for the current 2019 release of further five males, we used the same release location. The release period was shifted from September/October to December due to a severe Dengue outbreak in Bangladesh in September 2019.

We applied satellite transmitters on five male individuals and travel by boat to the release site in the west Sundarbans (Fig. 1). Transmitters were attached on the carapace with Epoxy glue and as security measure contact numbers of the station manager and POJF personnel were added clearly visible on the carapace, in case the terrapins are captured. The transmitters weigh 190 g, less than 2% of the body weight of the terrapins. All male displayed breeding colorations – black heads and red necks.

Preliminary Results (07.01.2019 – a month after the release)

Individual 716 was caught by fishermen on 15th Dec. 2019 and reported by the same people to our station manager, who brought the terrapin back to the Karamjal station and after checking its weight released it again half way along the previous route on 24th Dec. 2019

Individual 571 was captured on 21st Dec. 2019. Signals tracked the individual to a local market. FD officials could not find the animal; the transmitter was recovered by the town head and rendered to the Forest Department.

Individuals 596, 597 & 598 send infrequent signals in proximity of the release area.

The combined data of 10 adult males released in 2018 and 2019 will help to discuss if a sustainable reintroduction is feasible, depending on the survival rate and will allow management suggestions for the *in situ* bred and reared population, which comprises over 200 healthy hatchlings.

Output 2019

Poster Presentation:

- European Union of Aquarium Curators Conference in Nausicáa (France) 14.-18. October 2019
- European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) conference at Bioparc Zoo (Spain) 17.-21. September 2019

TSA Magazine 2018 Report: "*Batagur baska* Project - Bangladesh: The Growing Individuals and *in situ* Population Demand Long-Term Implementations"

TSA Magazine 2019; Article 2019 (in print): "First Steps to Reintroduction"

Release date: 07.12.2019

Release time: 16:00 Bangladesh, 10:00 UTC



Figure 1: Travel route by boat: Karamjal Conservation Station – South-West Sundarbans



Transmitter 703571
Tag number 40098100403458
Weight 10,56 kg



Transmitter 703596
Tag number 40098100400074
Weight 11,07 kg



Transmitter 703597
Tag number 40098100400217
Weight 12,05 kg



Transmitter 703598
Tag number 40098100409256
Weight 10,33 kg

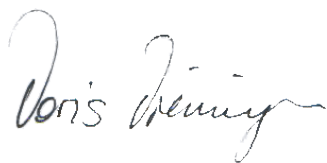


Transmitter 704716
Tag number 900111880979352
Weight 10,24 kg

Budget 2019

	Unit Price	Quantity	requested	actual costs
<u>Equipment</u>				
Transmitter Telonics and freight		1	1900	2149
Satellite service fees for 6 month (approx. 30/month)	180	5	900	900
Satellite Activation	36	5	180	180
Epoxy glue and material			300	-
			3280	3229
<u>Release Travel</u>				
Boat, fuel and food (release trip)			1800	1934
Project Coordinator flight (1 person; India-Bangladesh-India)			600	802
Zoo staff flights (2 people; Vienna-Bangladesh-Vienna)			2100	2066
local transportation and accomodation (3 people)			2000	3030
			6500	7832
Total in Euro			9780	11061
EAUC requested funding 2019				-5000
<i>Remaining costs were covered by the Vienna Zoo and the Austrian Zoo Organisation (OZO)</i>				6061

We sincerely appreciate your support for the *Batagur baska* Project



Dr. Doris Preininger
Vienna, 07.01.2020