CHELONIAN CONSERVATION AND BIOLOGY

International Journal of Turtle and Tortoise Research

Volume 2, Number 1

February 1996

Journal of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

First Record of *Heosemys spinosa* from the Philippines, with Biogeographic Notes

INDRANEIL DAS

Published by Chelonian Research Foundation

with support from

Conservation International, Chelonia Institute, Wildlife Conservation Society, Florida Audubon Society, and IUCN (The World Conservation Union) – Species Survival Commission













Chelonian Conservation and Biology, 1996, 2(1):80–82
© 1996 by Chelonian Research Foundation

First Record of *Heosemys spinosa* from the Philippines, with Biogeographic Notes

INDRANEIL DAS1,2

¹Centre for Herpetology, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Post Bag 4, Mamallapuram 603104 India; ²Present Address: Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 USA

Heosemys spinosa, the spiny turtle, is a widespread southeast Asian batagurid, distributed from Tenasserim in southern Myanmar, south to the tip of the Malay Peninsula, and also on the islands of Sumatra, Borneo, and Natuna (Smith, 1931; Pritchard, 1979; Iverson, 1992). It is apparently absent from Indo-China, and not previously known from the Philippines.

Two specimens of *H. spinosa* collected in the Philippines have now been identified in the collection of the Herpetology Division, Philippines National Museum (PNM). These include an adult male (Fig. 1) (identifiable from the deep plastral concavity and everted cliteropenis) and an adult female (showing a flat plastron and a wide postanal gap). They were collected on Mindanao Island by ornithologists Robert Kennedy and Pedro Gonzales. This comprises the first record of *H. spinosa* for the Philippines.

Measurements taken with vernier calipers to the nearest 0.1 mm of the larger adult male, PNM 2233, followed by the smaller adult female, PNM 2232, and descriptions of the two turtles are given below.

Straight carapace lengths 193.6 and 179.3 mm; straight carapace widths 161.3 and 141.5 mm; greatest plastron lengths 181.2 and 179.7 mm; median plastron lengths 164.1 and 167.0 mm; anterior plastron lobes 85.3 and 85.3 mm; posterior plastron lobes 107.5 and 97.1 mm; head widths 31.3 and 30.4 mm; tail lengths (vent to tip) 21.4 and 27.0 mm; plastral concavity depths 8.8 and 0.02 mm. Lengths of vertebral scutes, anterior to posterior: 43.3, 34.9, 32.0, 32.9, 35.7 and 37.7, 33.0, 30.2, 30.2, 33.9 mm. Lengths of plastral seams, anterior to posterior: 25.7, 12.3, 39.4, 38.3, 34.0, 14.8 and 18.9, 16.4, 40.8, 39.8, 36.8, 16.3 mm.

Shell moderately elevated, with a flattened vertebral region. A distinct vertebral keel, but lacking lateral keels. The anterior margin of the carapace is unserrated, the posterior margin weakly serrated. Nuchal small and triangular. Vertebral I constricted anteriorly. All vertebrals broader than long, and as broad as the costals. Plastron large, the greatest length approximately as long as the carapace, emarginated anteriorly and notched posteriorly. The longest median suture in the plastron is between the abdominals, the shortest between the anals. Both anterior and posterior lobes of the plastron are narrower than the median plastron length, the posterior lobe wider than the bridge. Both specimens have 27 annuli on costal III. Head small, upper jaw weakly