

International Conference on Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Tortoises and Turtles

In July, 1993, an extraordinary group of ecologists, conservationists, land managers, governmental officials, and policy makers representing 25 nations gathered at an international conference devoted to the **Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Tortoises and Turtles**. Because of their longevity and specialized requirements, tortoises and turtles serve as indicators of the health, quality, stability of ecosystems. Therefore, the issues, technologies, and solutions developed at this conference have applications to a wide range of organisms and ecosystems.

This uniquely structured conference was co-sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society. A generous seed grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management was the impetus for the conference. Five day-long scientific sessions were divided into morning presentations of formal papers reporting on current research, followed by afternoon workshops that explored specific conservation problems and developed remedial strategies. Of the 230 attendees, 75 speakers presented papers in either the formal sessions or the workshops, while an estimated 100 individuals participated in the interactive workshop sessions. A broad range of topics were covered, including direct and indirect threats to habitat, habitat fragmentation, long-term effects of habitat alteration; direct losses to populations from predation, disease, and human exploitation; the effects of the wildlife trade; regional status reports; a critical examination of the role of captive breeding, repatriation, and relocation; the application of genetics, demography, and ecology to conservation; recovery and management strategies; reserve design and integrated management strategies, the interface of science and policy; and the need for education and dissemination of information. An additional 30 delegates presented posters devoted to ecology, land use planning, resource management, conservation, and husbandry.

Grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture—Forest Service, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of the Interior—Bureau of Land Management, The Desert Tortoise Council, and the National Science Foundation supported the travel and registration costs of 26 foreign and 17 U.S. delegates. The U.S. delegate support was largely confined to financial assistance for graduate students to attend the meeting. The conference was held on the campus of the State University of New York at Purchase.

A number of distinguished scientists, conservationists, and public policy makers addressed the conference. Included in the opening day's addresses and plenary lectures were: J. Whitfield Gibbons, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, South Carolina; Michael W. Klemens, Center for

Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History, New York; Ian R. Swingland, The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, United Kingdom; Mary Christopher, University of Florida; and Nat B. Frazer, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, South Carolina. Leading international turtle conservationists participated in this turtle summit, including: John L. Behler, NYZS/The Wildlife Conservation Society; Kristin H. Berry, Bureau of Land Management; Olga Castaño-Mora, University of Colombia, Bogota; Linda J. Cayot, Charles Darwin Research Center, Galapagos Islands; Indraneil Das, University of Brunei Darussalam; Edward O. Moll, University of Eastern Illinois; Tej Kumar Shrestha, Tribhuvan University, Nepal; and Peter C.H. Pritchard, Florida Audubon Society. Addressing public policy issues on the conference's closing day were New York State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and Molly Olson, Special Assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management. The featured public policy presentation at the closing banquet was given by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Senior Attorney of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

A special task force has been established to implement the recommendations and strategies developed at the conference and to ensure the publication and dissemination of the proceedings and other educational materials evolving from this conference. Initially, this task force will focus on such critical management issues as: livestock grazing and its effects on the feeding ecology of tortoises, the role of disease in the management of wild populations, the economic and conservation impacts of the wildlife trade, and the establishment of an interdisciplinary training and communication program.

In response to the numerous inquiries and requests received since the Conference, plans are currently under way for the next turtle summit. The American Museum of Natural History – Turtle Recovery Program, the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society, and the U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management now announce that they have agreed to co-host **The Second International Conference on Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Tortoises and Turtles**. It is anticipated that this second conference will take place sometime in 1997, in a yet-to-be announced location. The second conference will retain the same guiding principles that made the first one such a success: an interdisciplinary, problem-solving approach, international scope, a strong commitment to foreign delegates (including ensuring the participation of those from developing countries), and a scholarship program to encourage student attendance.

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Bibliographic Database of Chelonian Literature Established

We have established a comprehensive bibliographic database of chelonian literature, encompassing references to tortoises, freshwater turtles, marine turtles, and turtle paleontology. Building on the tortoise bibliography published by Beaman, Burke, and Harpel-Burke (1989) in *The Conservation Biology of Tortoises* by Swingland and Klemens, we have expanded our format to include all chelonians, living and extinct. All references have been entered into a computerized searchable database, utilizing ProCite by Personal Bibliographic Software, Inc. In addition to the basic bibliographic information (Author, Date, Title, Citation), specific fields have also been created for cross-indexing of content matter, including: Taxonomic (Family), Taxonomic (species), Geographic Area, Subject (currently over 100 separate subject headings utilized), Language, and Remarks.

We are endeavoring to record all scientifically relevant turtle references from the very beginnings of natural history literature in the pre-Linnaean era up through the present. This has been an active process of data entry since the time of the last World Congress in Herpetology, and our current database stands at approximately 25,000 references. Much work remains to be accomplished to achieve the near-comprehensive database that we envision. On-line computer searching of recent Bio-Abstracts and Zoological Record has been undertaken, and on-line Wildlife Review has been accessed through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New York Zoological Society. Pre-computerized Bio-Abstracts, Zoological Record, and Wildlife Review records have been searched and are in the process of being methodically completed.

In terms of publication of this database, we are hoping to publish hard-copy bound volumes of the alphabetically-sorted basic bibliographic data (author, date, title, citation), and a separate indexed listing, with available accompanying disks (IBM or Mac) containing the searchable database with full bibliographic data including all cross-indexed content fields. Our projected date of public availability of the database is during the first half of 1994.

With this announcement, we are issuing a call for help with the project from our readership and Specialist Group membership. We are interested in any and all references on turtles with scientific merit. This includes not only peer-reviewed major articles and notes from major journals, but also the vast body of gray conservation literature in the forms of reports and technical memoranda. Any references on tortoises, freshwater turtles, marine turtles, turtle paleontology, turtle archeology, turtle husbandry and captive care, etc., are all welcome. Our interests include not only the

traditional taxonomically- or conservation-oriented turtle literature, but also physiology, veterinary care, medical research, histology, anatomy, reproduction, genetics, biochemistry, parasitology, phylogenetics, ecology, demography, zoogeography, trade and exploitation, human use, vernacular names, etc. Any subject dealing with turtles is of interest and value. We are interested in receiving any bibliographic listings that any of you may have established, so that we can cross-check your lists against ours and add new references to the database. Actual reprints of articles, especially of your own work, would also be very welcome so that they can be thoroughly cross-indexed as well. Any help received will be given full credit in the ensuing published bibliography. We will be happy to go through rough lists or index cards, or whatever you have available. Computerized databases are also welcome in any format. We have the capability of handling either IBM or Macintosh, but prefer the latter. Please contact Rhodin directly if you are able and willing to help in any way.

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Chelonian Research Foundation Linnaeus Fund: 1992 Grant Recipients

The Chelonian Research Foundation (CRF), established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt private operating foundation in May, 1992, has created a turtle research endowment fund named **The Linnaeus Fund** and invites the submission of chelonian research proposals for its **Annual Turtle Research Awards**. Named after the Swedish creator of binomial nomenclature, the Fund honors the first turtle taxonomist and father of all modern systematics.

In its first year, CRF awarded four grants of \$500 each on 16 December 1992. Awards granted were as follows:

FRYE, SHEILA E. Antioch New England Graduate School, Concord, New Hampshire. The ecology and natural history of the wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*) in southern New Hampshire.

JANZEN, FREDRIC J. University of California, Davis, California. Molecular systematics and evolution of sex-determining mechanisms in marsh turtles (*Clemmys*).

PERILLO, KATHY. University of New Haven, New Haven, Connecticut. Seasonal movements and habitat preference of spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*) in southern New England.

WEBB, ROBERT G. University of Texas, El Paso, Texas. Geographic variation in the giant softshell turtle, *Pelochelys bibroni* (Owen).

Linnaeus Fund awards are granted annually to individuals for specific turtle research projects, with either partial or