

only 5-8 individuals observed during surveys in the early 1990s. There have been a few scattered reports of single turtles at other sites, but follow-up surveys failed to find evidence of additional populations. The spotted turtle was proposed for Endangered status in November 1996. Threats to spotted turtles and their habitat were identified in the listing process, and include habitat loss and fragmentation, pet collection, and road mortality. No action has been on the listing since November, 1996. (Source: Mark Ferguson, Zoologist, Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program.)

Florida (Conviction). — On 3 February 1998, the U.S. government announced the conviction and imprisonment of Michael J. Van Nostrand, owner and president of Strictly Reptiles, Hollywood, Florida, and the revocation of the company's import/export license. Mr. Van Nostrand pled guilty to charges under the Lacey Act associated with a conspiracy to illegally purchase frilled dragon lizards (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*) and Fly River turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*) exported from Indonesia through the Netherlands, as well as illegal acts related to the purchase of Argentine boa constrictors (*Boa constrictor occidentalis*), Chaco tortoises (*Geochelone chilensis*), rainbow boas (*Epicrates cenchria*), red-footed tortoises (*Geochelone carbonaria*), tegu lizards (*Tupinambis* spp.), and yellow-spotted Amazon turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*). Mr. Van Nostrand was sentenced to eight months imprisonment, eight months home detention, and a fine of nearly \$250,000 to be paid to Indonesia chapter of the World Wildlife Fund, and will be used to operate the Lorentz Strict Nature Reserve in Irian Jaya. (Source: U.S. Government Press Release.)

Florida (Poaching). — A man charged six times in the past for turtle egg theft was arrested again. Marine Patrol officers, using night vision goggles, confiscated 388 marine turtle eggs when they arrested Alvin G. Keel before dawn Friday. It was his seventh time being charged with trying to poach turtle eggs. If convicted, Keel faces up to three years in prison and up to a \$3,000 fine. A civil penalty of \$38,300, or \$100 for each egg taken, also can be applied, Florida Marine Patrol Lt. Royce Hamilton said. The patrol also is considering federal poaching charges that could result in maximum penalties of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, Hamilton said. The eggs are considered aphrodisiacs by some and are sold outside area bars for about \$1.50 each, Hamilton said. (Source: Naples Daily News, 8 June 1998.)

New Jersey. — The Cape May County Zoo Reptile House burned to the ground on 26 May 1998. More than 200 creatures were killed. Four alligators, two tortoises and three turtles usually housed within the building survived the fire because they had been recently moved outside for the warmer months. The seven-year-old reptile house was not equipped with a sprinkler system and the alarm system in place was not hooked up to the police station, as are local schools and hospitals, said Middle Township Detective Paul Loefflad. Overnight security guards were eliminated in a county budget cut a few years ago. Some consideration was given to increasing security, but nothing was ever done. Zoo

veterinarian Bert Paluch said he treated the surviving tortoises for possible infections and smoke inhalation, and checked all the nearby animals for any signs of effects from the fire. (Source: Philadelphia Inquirer, 28 May 1998.)

Kansas. — Newspaper reports have come in discussing a Kansas tradition of box turtle racing. One Whichita County Fair has been doing it for 67 years and from 100 to 700 turtles can be involved in some events. Problems include that turtles are collected and released indiscriminately, that they are sometimes stored in the back of flatbed trucks where temperatures of over 100°F are common, and there have been arrests of illegally selling the turtles afterwards. (Source: Article in Topeka Capital Journal, from Karen Graham, Segwick County Zoo.)

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Chelonian Research Foundation Linnaeus Fund: 1997 Grant Recipients

ANDERS G.J. RHODIN



Chelonian Research Foundation (CRF), established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt private operating foundation in 1992, administers a turtle research endowment fund named *The Linnaeus Fund*, for which it invites the submission of chelonian research proposals for its *Annual Turtle Research Awards*. Named after Carolus Linnaeus [1707-1778], the Swedish creator of binomial nomenclature, the fund honors the first turtle taxonomist and father of all modern systematics.

For its 6th Annual Linnaeus Fund Awards selection on 31 December 1997, CRF awarded a total of \$6400 divided among 7 research projects. Awards granted were as follows:

- BOYKIN, C. SCOTT. Nesting ecology of the Florida softshell (*Apalone ferox*) at Lake Maggiore, Pinellas County, Florida. Eckerd College, Tampa, Florida.
- BUHLMANN, KURT A., KERR, RHEMA, AND TUBERVILLE, TRACEY D. A proposal to investigate distribution, population size structure, and effects of harvesting in the Jamaican slider turtle *Trachemys terrapen*. University of Georgia, Aiken, South Carolina.

- CAMPBELL, CATHI L. Population dynamics of green turtles in Caribbean Nicaragua and the impact of a marine turtle fishery. University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.
- FELDMAN, CHRISTOFFER R. Phylogenetic relationships of Testudinidae with emphasis on *Geochelone* Fitzinger, 1835. San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California.
- NELSON, RYAN E., AND FITZGERALD, LEE A. The role of temperature in activity and habitat use in a large aquatic turtle, *Macrolemys temmincki*. Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.
- PRESTI, STEPHANIE. Mercury concentration in the scutes of black sea turtles, *Chelonia mydas agassizii*, in the Gulf of California. Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.
- STANDING, K. LORRAINE. Reproduction and nest success of Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) in Nova Scotia: management guidelines for the recovery of a threatened population. Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Linnaeus Fund awards are granted annually to individuals for specific turtle research projects, with either partial or full support as funding allows. Priority is generally given to projects concerning freshwater turtles, but tortoise and marine turtle research proposals are also funded. Priority is generally given to the following general research areas: taxonomy and systematic relationships, distribution and zoogeography, ecology, natural history, and morphology, but other topics are also considered. Priority is also given to projects that demonstrate potential relevance to the scientific basis and understanding of chelonian diversity and conservation biology. Award recipients agree to publish at least partial or summarized results of the supported research in a CRF-sponsored publication, such as *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*.

Awards at this time are typically in the \$1000 range for each project, with about five or more projects funded annually. It is anticipated that there will be increased grant support from year to year as the endowment fund grows. The annual application deadline is November 15, with disbursement on December 31. Submit applications in formal grant proposal format in triplicate as follows: title page, project objective, background and research rationale, materials and methods, total project expenses, funding requested from CRF, funding available or requested from other organizations, general timetable, literature cited, and curriculum vitae for all key personnel.

Awards are granted through an internal review process carried out by the Director and Scientific Advisory Board of CRF, which includes Anders G.J. Rhodin, Russell A. Mittermeier, Peter C.H. Pritchard, John L. Behler, and Terry E. Graham. Submit applications to:

ANDERS G.J. RHODIN, Chelonian Research Foundation, 168 Goodrich Street, Lunenburg, Massachusetts 01462 USA; Phones: 978-534-9440, 978-582-9668, Fax: 978-840-8184, E-mail: RhodinCRF@aol.com

Turtle Decoys – A Request for Information

RENÉ E. HONEGGER

The use of decoys in North America and Europe to bring ducks and geese, and formerly shore birds, within reach of the hunter's gun is well known and documented (Fuhrmann, 1987; Engers, 1990; Ciferi, 1993; Rossini, 1994; Honegger, 1998). Fish-lures are also known to be used by traditional ice-fishermen (Apfelbaum, 1990).

While visiting the decoy collection at the Shelburne Museum at Burlington, Vermont, USA, in 1993, I came across a wooden decoy marine turtle with a painted head, probably representing a green turtle, *Chelonia mydas* (Fig. 1a). The length of the wooden carapace was 75 cm. Bob Shaw, curator, indicated that it originated from Venezuela.

In June 1995, after the International Congress of Chelonian Conservation at Gonfaron, France, I visited an antique dealer in the vicinity of Nice, France, specialized in the trade of bird decoys. There I discovered two turtle decoys which looked similar to the specimen seen at Shelburne, but without painting on the head (Fig. 1b). The length of the wooden carapace was 65 cm. I was told that the turtle decoys originated from Haiti. Each was made from a single piece of light wood and apparently had a loop on the bottom (plastron) side to which a line and anchor weight could have been attached.

I have spoken to many herpetologists and decoy collectors, but nobody has been able to tell me about the origin and the utilization of turtle decoys to lure marine turtles within the reach of harpoon hunters. I would be interested in learning more about the use of wooden lures, and this hunting tradition with turtles in general.

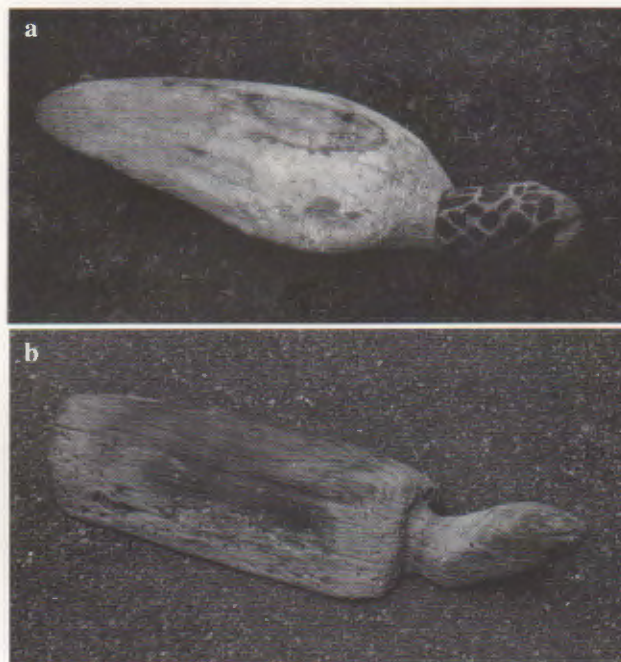


Figure 1. Turtle decoys from a. Venezuela, and b. Haiti.