

**STUDBOOK  
BREEDING PROGRAMME**

**TESTUDO KLEINMANNI  
EGYPTIAN OR KLEINMANN'S TORTOISE**



Photo: H.A. Zwartepoorte

**Annual report 2003**



**E**uropean  
**S**tudbook  
**F**oundation

H.A. Zwartepoorte, Species-coördinator.

# **Studbook Breeding Programme Testudo kleinmanni – Egyptian or Kleinmann's tortoise**

## **Annual report 2003**

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### **1. Introduction and activities 2003**

#### **1.a. Short history and introduction.**

In 1997 by the former Overkoepelend Orgaan Stamboeken (OOS) the first studbook for the species was developed and managed by Jaco Bruekers. In the annual studbook 1998 49 specimens were registered with a living population of 24 (13.11.0) specimens. The species was kept at 11 locations.

In 2000 within the European Association for Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) by Wenman and Zwartepoorte a proposal was done to initiate an Endangered Species Programme (EEP) for the species. This was accepted by the EAZA executive committee and in 2001 the first EEP studbook/breeding programme for *Testudo kleinmanni* was a fact.

The idea emerged to incorporate the private ESF participants into the EAZA EEP and the ESF studbook for the species was stopped, as development decreased more and more during the period 1998-2001.

Caused by the fact that 3 private keepers received animals from the Edinburgh Zoo these participants were taken into the EEP; 2 of these private persons are still participating into the EEP.

#### **1.b. Activities 2003.**

In 2003 it turned out to be rather difficult to incorporate more private keepers/breeders into the EEP, due to a rejecting attitude of the EAZA office; at least the feeling emerged that it was not really appreciated that private participation was accepted.

As Esther Wenman stopped as co-EEP studbook-coordinator during 2003 I decided to give the private ESF studbook a second chance and from that moment I manage both the EAZA EEP and the ESF studbook. A brief survey was carried out and 4 private participants applied for participation.

Of all former ESF studbook participants only 1 still is in the present ESF-studbook; 2 former participants are incorporated into the EEP as mentioned under 1.a.

8 former private ESF participants are not keeping the species any longer, or the specimens kept died.

As studbook keeper of both the private and the zoo studbooks it can be very helpful combining and tuning both programmes. The husbandry and breeding guidelines for example are tools in both studbooks.

If the climate for better and more intensive cooperation between EAZA and ESF improves both studbooks can be glued together anyway in the future.

As ESF chairman and studbook keeper for both programmes I will do my very best to achieve this.

## **2. Studbook population.**

December 31, 2003 the total living population exists out of 18 (7.8.3) specimens. By 2 private EEP participants 9 (3.5.1) are kept; the total number of specimens kept by privates is 27 (10.13.4).

## **3. Locations.**

December 31, 2003 within the ESF studbook the species is kept at 4 locations; 2 in the Netherlands, and 2 in Belgium.

## **4. Births.**

At location 3 3 animals were born. At 28/7, 9/9 and 11/9 these specimens (studbook nos. 000016, 000017 and 000018) were born out of Dam (no. 000014) and have possible Sires 000012 and 000013.

## **5. Imports.**

As a matter of fact all 18 specimens can be considered as imported into the studbook. All 15 adult animals were already kept by the 4 participants for a longer period of time. 11 specimens were born in captivity in Europe.

## **6. Deaths**

No deaths are reported during 2003.

## **7. Transfers.**

From location 4 male (studbook no. 000006) was transferred to location 1, where 3 females were housed. By both parties a written agreement was stated about the deviding of future offspring.

From location 4 male (studbook no. 000003) was transferred to location 2 at this location only 1 female was kept. A similar agreement was stated.

## **8. Discussion.**

### **8.a. Ex situ situation.**

The fact that 14 of the total living studbook population of 18 is born in captivity reflects the situation within the private reptile keepers sector of improved reproduction over the last decade. During the eighties and early nineties large numbers have been exported from Egypt in particular for the international pet trade. The majority of these animals died. This is mainly caused by the fact that many of these tortoises were sold to un-experienced pet trade consumers. Importers and dealers sold the small attractive tortoises as a substitute for the Cites regulated *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca*, being more difficult to require.

The private organized more experienced keepers were more successful keeping the tortoises alive and gathered and shared useful information on behaviour, nutrition, reproduction and proper management.

This large percentage captive born animals within the studbook population is of course very promising for the future, but on the other hand the reproduction by the wild caught specimens is also essential for the genetically health of the studbook population.

Managing both EAZA and ESF studbooks/breeding programmes will hopefully give me the opportunity exchanging specimens between both studbooks. The total captive population of both studbooks is 220 specimens.

By Jarmo Perala (2001) the new species *Testudo weneri* is described. This species is supposed to occur east of the river Nile in Egypt into Israel. Morphological differences between both *Testudo kleinmanni* and *T. weneri* are relatively small and difficult to determine.

Of older studbook specimens the origin is unknown, as in the early period of export tortoises were captured both in Egypt and eastern parts of Libya. More recently the majority of the exports originate mainly from Libya.

This phenomena makes it very well possible that some studbook specimens belong to the species *T. weneri*. For this reason I gather photo's of all studbook specimens (EAZA and ESF).

For the EAZA EEP I drafted husbandry and breeding guidelines. These will be finished very shortly and will be published on the ESF internet site soon.

#### **8.b. In situ situation.**

For many species of reptiles and tortoises and fresh water turtles in particular the status in the wild is dramatic. Main reasons for this are the increasing human world population, industrialization, urbanization, extending agriculture, the making use of animals for human consumption and for certain species in a lesser extent the international pet trade.

For the Egyptian tortoise however the international pet trade played a major role in the decline of the species in the wild. For many years large amounts of tortoises were for sale on the Egyptian markets, in particular on the big markets in Cairo.

Since February 1977 *Testudo kleinmanni* is protected by law according the Cites regulations (appendix 2) and was upgraded to Cites 1 in February 1995. Egypt is enforcing these regulations and over the last decade large numbers of animals have been confiscated on the markets.

Parts of these confiscated shipments are housed in private animal reception centres.

Sherif M. and Mindy Baha El Din of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency play a key role in the protection of both *Testudo kleinmanni* and *T. weneri* in Egypt.

In special protected areas confiscated tortoises have been introduced as part of a research project. Sherif and Mindy Baha El Din also carry out field research on the remaining populations of both species in Egypt (2003).

In general little is known on ecology and biology of both secretive species in the wild. With this respect the ex situ population can be seen as an important source from which vital information can be gathered. This information can be used for conservation projects in the wild.

### **8.c.**

Activities planned for 2004:

- i. The collection of photographs of all studbook specimens for a proper determination of both *Testudo kleinmanni* and *T. weneri*. All participants are requested to deliver photo's of carapace, plastron, head and front side of the forelegs.
- ii. Reorganisation of the available bibliography in order to separate useful relevant papers from the un-useful papers. A list will be published.
- iii. Publication of the husbandry and breeding guidelines.
- iv. Intensifying co-operation with EAZA in order to establish a better coöperative management of both the ESF private studbook and the EAZA's EEP.
- v. Jarmo Perela will be asked to deliver an easy to use identification manual for determination of both *Testudo kleinmanni* and *T. weneri*.

### **9. Bibliography.**

By Hans Dieter Philippen an enormous list of publications is made available to the studbook for which I thank him very much.

From this bibliography a selection will be made of most recent and most interesting publications. This some what shorter list will be published on the ESF internet site soon.

Baha El Din, Sherif M., Omar Attum, and Mindy Baha El Din. 2003. Status of *Testudo kleinmanni* and *T. weneri* in Egypt. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*, 2003, 4(3): 648-655.

Perela, J. (2001): A new species of *Testudo* (Testudines: Testudinidae) from the Middle East, with implications for conservation. *Journal of Herpetology*, St. Louis: 35(4): 567-582.

April 6, 2004.

**H.A. Zwartepoorte, Species-Coördinator.**

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(Testudo kleinmanni)

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Stud #	Sex	Hatch Date	Sire	Dam	Location	Date	Local ID	Event
000001	F	~ 1977	WILD	WILD	UNKNOWN 2	1 Jan 1980 27 Aug 1994	UNK LN1	Capture Transfer
000002	M	28 Apr 1998	UNK	UNK	BRAND 4	28 Apr 1998 20 Apr 2003	UNK RV1	Hatch Transfer
000003	M	3 May 1998	UNK	UNK	BRAND 4 2	3 May 1998 20 Apr 2003 1 Jan 2004	UNK RV2 LN2	Hatch Transfer Transfer
000004	M	2 Mar 1998	UNK	UNK	BRAND 4	2 Mar 1998 20 Apr 2003	UNK RV3	Hatch Transfer
000005	M	11 Mar 1994	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 4	11 Mar 1994 22 Jun 2003	UNK RV	Hatch Transfer
000006	M	11 Mar 1994	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 4 1	11 Mar 1994 22 Jun 2003 14 Feb 2004	UNK RV5 AM4	Hatch Transfer Transfer
000007	F	11 Mar 1994	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 4	11 Mar 1994 22 Jun 2003	UNK RV6	Hatch Transfer
000008	F	1 Jan 1970	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 4	1 Jan 1970 22 Jun 2003	UNK RV7	Hatch Transfer
000009	F	1 Jan 1980	WILD	WILD	UNKNOWN 1	1 Jan 1981 1 Jan 1982	UNK AM1	Capture Transfer
000010	F	1 Jan 1980	WILD	WILD	UNKNOWN 1	1 Jan 1981 1 Jan 1982	UNK AM2	Capture Transfer
000011	F	1 Jan 1980	WILD	WILD	UNKNOWN 1	1 Jan 1981 1 Jan 1982	UNK AM3	Capture Transfer
000012	M	10 May 1996	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 3	10 May 1996 1 May 2000	UNK WN1	Hatch Transfer
000013	M	25 May 2000	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 3	25 May 2000 12 Jul 2000	UNK WN2	Hatch Transfer

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Stud #	Sex	Hatch Date	Sire	Dam	Location	Date	Local ID	Event
000014	F	8 May 2000	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 3	8 May 2000 12 Jul 2000	UNK WN3	Hatch Transfer
000015	F	20 Apr 2000	UNK	UNK	UNKNOWN 3	20 Apr 2000 12 Jul 2000	UNK WN4	Hatch Transfer
000016	?	28 Jul 2003	MULT	000014	3	28 Jul 2003	WN5	Hatch
000017	?	9 Sep 2003	MULT	000014	3	9 Sep 2003	WN6	Hatch
000018	?	11 Sep 2003	MULT	000014	3	11 Sep 2003	WN7	Hatch
000019	F	17 Mar 2000	UNK	UNK	SCHMALTZ 5	17 Mar 2000 11 Oct 2003	UNK CILLA	Hatch Transfer
000020	M	2 Aug 2000	UNK	UNK	SCHMALTZ 5	2 Aug 2000 11 Oct 2003	UNK WOODST	Hatch Transfer

TOTALS: 8.9.3 (20)