

# **STUDBOOK BREEDING PROGRAMM**

## **CHERSINA ANGULATA**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2001**

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## **Studbook Breeding programme *Chersina angulata*, Annual report 2001.**

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### **1. Introduction and activities in 2001.**

#### **1.1 Introduction.**

This annual report will summarise activities of the studbook breeding programme of the South African bowsprit tortoise *Chersina angulata*.

Due to the slow developments of proper studbook software within the European studbook Foundation (ESF) the ESF board examined the possibility of the use of Sparks, issued by ISIS. Communication between ESF and ISIS took about a year, but finally (March 2002) there was agreement on this issue. The former programme used did not have a printing option, so a printed version of the studbook population is not possible at present.

#### **1.2 Activities.**

Having just a small studbook population of 8 individuals at the beginning of the year 2001 a request for importing 20 specimens from South Africa into Switzerland was supported by the studbook on the conditions mentioned in the annual report 2000.

The import took place July 9, 2001. 11.9 tortoises were imported and were originating from Tygerberg Zoo, Kraaifontein, RSA.

South Cape Nature Conservation issued an export Cites permit and the Cites office in Bern, Switzerland issued the import permit.

Of the shipment only one male died within a few days.

8 Specimens were transferred to 3 locations in Switzerland, 11 specimens staid at the importers location. One of the initial people interested in the tortoises cancelled his option prior to import.

The export of the tortoises only was possible on the condition that the ESF studbook agreed with the import also on the conditions mentioned in the annual report 2000. The Swiss importers request was answered of that manner by Cape nature Conservation.

## **2. Studbook population.**

The total number of registered live specimens on 31 December 2001 was 22.

An increase of 14 animals compared to 31 December 2000, mainly caused by the import of 20 animals into Switzerland (see 5).

## **3. Locations.**

The total numbers of registered locations on 31 December 2001 is 7. An increase of 4 locations, caused by the import of animals to 4 locations in Switzerland (see 5).

## **4. Births.**

In 2001 no births were recorded. At one location in Holland one female produced two unfertile eggs. At this location adaptations were made with respect to climate and food. Also the sexes were separated, and only after hibernation the animals are kept together for a short period.

## **5. Imports.**

Twenty animals were imported into Switzerland. A request to do this was done to Cape Nature Conservation. This South African governmental organisation responded that export only was awarded if the ESF studbook agreed on this. The Annual report 2000 already contained a number of conditions on which export could be considered. The Swiss importer was informed that if the export and import of the animals was carried out according these conditions there were no objections against this action. The importer agreed on this and Cape Nature Conservation issued the export permits. An import permit was issued by the Swiss Bundesamt für Veterinärwesen on 19/4/2001. The animals were obtained from the Tygerberg Zoo, Kraaifontein, South Africa. The animals were entered into the ESF studbook for the species. The animals were housed at 4 locations in Switzerland.

## **6. Deaths.**

In 2001 6 animals died.

One sub adult male died shortly after the import into Switzerland. 1.1. animals died on one location in Switzerland. Cause of death is unknown; shortly after moving the animals from an indoor enclosure to an outdoor enclosure both animals died. At one other location in Switzerland one male died during a short hibernation period, and one male was euthanized after a period of cold and refusal of food. After treatment with antibiotics (Baytril) no recovery was seen. X-ray photo's showed a 50% lung contents with unknown fluid. The vet decided to euthanize the tortoise.

1 Female died on a location in Holland. Cause of death is unknown; the carcass was too autolytic for post mortem research.

## **7. Transfers.**

Apart from the transfer of 8 animals from the Swiss importer to three locations in Switzerland, and one additional transfer from the Swiss importer to one of the Swiss studbook participants as replacement for the two deaths, no further transfers can be recorded.

## **8. Discussion.**

With this Swiss import the ex situ ESF-studbook population got an enormous impulse.

With a total of 20 (9.10.1) animals it must be possible to increase the captive population.

Chersina angulata still is a problematic tortoise in captivity as far as adaptation to the northern hemisphere climate concerned.

The 2001 import shows this. All studbook participants must be aware of this. As soon as the animals adapt to their captive environment they prove unproblematic.

Unfortunately no births can be recorded in 2001. The freshly imported tortoises had to accustom to their new captive environments. I herewith stress all participant to do all in their power to reproduce this beautiful species.

During the year 2001 within the private herpetological field some inquiries were made about possible participation within the Chersina studbook. It looks as if we can welcome three new locations in the year 2002. One of these participants keeps a large number of adults and is also reproducing reasonable numbers.

With this respect at this moment no further imports are directly necessary. Requests for support with respect to new imports into Europe will have no support of the ESF-studbook.

Despite the legal protection in South Africa and the to my opinion very well to be respected way of acting of Cape nature Conservation with respect to export with approval of the ESF studbook, still large numbers of animals are illegally smuggled into Europe. Unconfirmed sources note several hundreds of specimens have been illegally imported into the Czeck Republic alone during 2001.

The illegal pet trade proves very difficult to control.

On several occasions, mainly Eastern Europe, confiscated tortoises are housed in zoos in the region. What happened with the confiscated animals in Bulgaria in 2000 is unknown.

At this moment efforts are intensified to achieve cooperation with the European zoo community. It looks as if the climate is improving.

Plans for the year 2002.

The announced research within the Dutch Turtle and Tortoise Society (NSV) on tortoise food will be finalized this year.

A call for additional Chersina studbook-participants will be published in the European Herpetological magazines.

Within the ESF husbandry guidelines for all studbook species are developed. For Chersina angulata these guidelines are in preparation and will be published this year.

Within a few months all studbook data will be put into Sparks and all participants will receive a Sparks studbook print out.

Acknowledgements:

First of all the studbook wants to thank Cape Nature Conservation in the Republic of South Africa for issuing the export permits for 20 specimens. Without the support of this governmental organisation to the ESF-studbook it wouldn't have been possible to increase the ex situ population.

Secondly the studbook is very pleased with the possibility obtaining specimens from the Tygerberg Zoo, Kraaifontein near Capetown. It concerns tortoises being already longer in captivity. Collecting animals from the wild is not to be considered.

10 May 2002.

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