

PELUSIOS *species*

African mud turtles

Studbook breeding programme



Year report 2004



European
Studbook
Foundation

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STUDBOOK PELUSIOS SPP. : RAPPORT 2004

Introduction

The Pelusios studbook opened at September 1st, 2004. During the months before this date we have been occupied with an investigation to the status of the population of Pelusios in the Netherlands. We also investigated which species were present. During our research we came to the conclusion that in the near future a studbook for Pelusios species would be desirable.

The (re)opening of the studbook came a few steps closer when Henk Zwartepoorte contacted us about a large group of Pelusios being confiscated in Germany. His question was if we could give refuge to all or a part of these turtles. Meanwhile Harry Rotmans, boardmember of the ESF, was aware of

our project and he advised us to go public and inform the ESF board about our project. We followed his advise.

Confiscated turtles can only receive clearance from the authorities if they will be entering a studbook within the ESF. Because of at the moment these Pelusios were confiscated such a studbook for Pelusios was non-existing and so the next logical step was resurrecting the Pelusios studbook. And so, after negotiating with the ESF board a Pelusios studbook was opened.

The confiscated Pelusios in Germany did get customs clearance afterwards, but the Pelusios studbook had gained its place on the map.

However, having hardly come to rest from al the hubbub of searching staying places for the confiscated Pelusios from Germany, another shipment of Pelusios was confiscated. This time a shipment of Pelusios was confiscated in Denmark.

At the moment of writing negotiations concerning these Pelusios are still going on. For about 25 turtles a refuge is arranged and we hope to see these Pelusios in next years year report.

The last decades Pelusios have been imported in impressive numbers and still are being imported in numbers. However, Pelusios are not popular among turtle keepers. This is probably caused by their dull colours or because they simply aren't rare enough to earn their place within a turtle collection.

Because this is the first year for the studbook, participants are few. For the coming year we expect an increase in participants, mainly because we are looking across the Dutch border to find more participants. Especially in Germany we are expecting to encounter a substantial number of Pelusios keepers.

Studbook population

On December 31st, 2004 the Pelusios studbook consisted of 34 living specimens:

Pelusios castaneus: 11.12.10 (33)

Pelusios niger: 0.1.0 (1)

As visible, Pelusios niger is represented with only one animal. Special with Pelusios niger is that in the near future the species will probably be split into two subspecies. The studbook animal will then belong to the black, nominal-form.

Locations

On December 31st, 2004 there are 10 locations within the studbook where Pelusios are being kept. At some locations Pelusios are being kept as a single specimen. In the years to come, there where is a need for it, we will create breeding groups from these "loners". This will be possible by loaning animals for breeding purposes or by donations from within or without the studbook.

Transfers

During 2004, no transfers took place.

Births

During 2004 only one birth was reported. This is at location Hagen. More eggs were being incubated but these didn't hatch as the incubator got damaged meanwhile. Eggs at location Grünewald proved infertile and eggs at location van Putten were destroyed on purpose because juveniles from the 2003 hatching still haven't found new owners.

Deaths

Sadly 1 animal died. This was one of the 2003 captive-breeds at location van Putten.

Imports

During 2004 we've seen about 40 Pelusios in reptile shops or exhibitions. Some of those were captive-breeds. All Pelusios seen were Pelusios castaneus. Other figures concerning import or export are at present unknown to us.

Discussion

Although the studbook population can not be considered big, it is stabile. We are convinced that the current number of participants can together produce 50 hatchlings per year, if needed. However, as experience shows it is difficult to relocate captive-bred offspring and so we would advise not to breed *Pelusios castaneus* during 2005. Of course one could dump his offspring at the local reptile shop, but that's not our philosophy behind it all. During 2005 we want to try to make the interest in the *Pelusios* species grow among turtle keepers.

All animals within the studbook are in good condition and all but the 2003/2004 captive-breeds are of breeding age.

At present there is no cooperation between the ESF *Pelusios* studbook and zoos. We hope this will change in the future.

The status of *Pelusios* in the wild is mainly unknown. It is known that they are eaten by local people. The influence of this on the wild populations is unknown. However, all types of freshwater turtles from Africa have been spotted at the food markets in China and so it would be very likely that the export of *Pelusios* turtles to China will only increase in the coming years. Especially now the number of turtles living in the wild in Asia is dwindling.

The status of *Pelusios* in captivity is also grim. This is simply so because they are not encountered in large numbers in captivity, especially in private collections. As previous comments already showed, the only *Pelusios* species encountered abundantly is *Pelusios castaneus*. We know that other species are being imported in Europe, but in much smaller quantities. Species known to be imported are *Pelusios niger*, *Pelusios adansoni*, *Pelusios carinatus*, *Pelusios sinuatus* and *Pelusios chapini*.

Although many private breeders claim to keep *Pelusios subniger*, we still have to see the first true *Pelusios subniger*. *Pelusios* species within the studbook are few, so we will try to increase the number of species being kept. We want to achieve this by inviting more *Pelusios* keepers to participate in the studbook and also by relocating confiscated *Pelusios* turtles at participants locations.

- **Objectives for 2005**
Increasing the studbook population by more intensive publications for the studbook
- Publish more articles about keeping and breeding Pelusios species.
This will mainly be done through our website www.pelusios.com
- Completing the website
- Improve the connections with other Pelusios experts
- Intensify the quest for more studbook participants, especially outside The Netherlands
- Obtaining more literature concerning Pelusios
- Maintaining more contact with other studbook keepers and in this way locating more Pelusios

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