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On the giant Javanese softshelled turtles (Trionychidae)

McCord and Pritchard (2003 “2002”) described a new species of *Chitra* from Myanmar and named the Javan (and Sumatran) populations of *C. chitra* as a new subspecies, *C. chitra javanensis*. When examining McCord and Pritchard’s paper, some errors were found and are rectified here to avoid confusions in the future. Additional data on the nomenclature and occurrence of this subspecies are provided here.

This taxon, referred to by Iskandar and Mumpuni (2003 “2002”) as *C. chitra javanica* is clearly an error, hence it should be considered as an incorrect subsequent spelling of *javanensis* or invalid emendation of the original proposed name.

In addition to Müller’s (1923) specimen “collected” by Dr. J. Elbert from Buitenzorg (now Bogor) and which is at present in the Bavarian State Museum, another specimen of *Chitra* from Java which is in the Museum Zoologicum

Bogoriense (MZB) collection has been acquired during the same period (around 1908), from Tandjoeng (now spelled Tanjung) Priok, harbour of Jakarta, West Java (Ouwens, 1914). The collector mentioned on the tag is A. C. Buisson. Dr. Elbert actually led at least one of the numerous “Sunda Expedition Rensch” to the Lesser Sunda Islands, especially Timor, but not to Java, and is not known to have collected any specimen from outside the Lesser Sunda Islands (Roux, 1911, 1912). At that time, the results of most faunistic as well as floristic collecting activities were brought to Buitenzorg (in this case to MZB) which served as temporary or permanent deposition centre. These two records are interesting because Tanjung Priok is actually at the mouth of the Ciliwung River that flows through Bogor to Jakarta. While it will be difficult to determine if these two specimens were actually collected together, it is almost certain that the Bavarian State Museum specimen of *C. chitra javanensis* was not collected by Dr. Elbert.

This first MZB *Chitra* specimen from Tanjung Priok (MZB Test 027, dry preserved and displayed in the exhibition hall) measured 1,290 mm (TCL, completely stuffed specimen, measured after being stuffed). In early 1977, after a heavy flooding of Ciliwung River that affected Jakarta, a second giant specimen of *Chitra*, of 1,170 mm (TCL, carapacial length including the cartilage, measured when still alive, MZB Test 294) was caught at Jalan Radio Dalam, southern Jakarta and handed to the Ragunan Zoological Park. The reptile keeper, not knowing the identity of this specimen promptly contacted me and I found that it represents the first capture of *Chitra* in about 70 years, after the first specimen was found. The next year, at around the same time of the year, another (the third) giant *Chitra* specimen, 1,100 mm (TCL) appeared after heavy flooding that affected Jakarta not far from the place when the first specimen was caught. This specimen (MZB Test 293) died after three months in captivity, and after being skeletonized, the skull was found to have a hole originating from a 22 mm gunshot. The specimen from 1977 (MZB Test 294) survived for five years and thereafter, was also

skeletonized. A fourth specimen (MZB Test 295, also skeletonized, not measured when alive), acquired in the year 1987, has been added to the collection and originated from Bengawan Solo River, Central Java. Webb (1995) also recorded a skull from Java in the Leiden museum (RMNH 7054), but unfortunately without exact provenance. These four Javanese specimens in MZB are comparable to PCHP records of giant *C. chitra* specimens (Pritchard, 2001). The four MZB records in addition to the "Elbert's" specimens of *C. chitra* are substantiated by specimens and their provenance is clear, and the records of *Chitra* from western Java is confirmed, and the distribution essentially covers the whole northern parts of the island.

It is unfortunate that the type locality of the holotype is in error. The catalogue entry mentioned Bengawan Solo, near the border to Central Java, most probably between Kalitidu and Padangan, Bojonegoro District, East Java, donated by F. B. Yuwono, June 1999, and did not come from Pasuruan "River". In addition, the

"type" locality from where most of the paratypes originated, is actually within Lecces, Probolinggo district (F. B. Yuwono, 2004, pers. comm.) Pasuruan "river", is in the Pasuruan District, and not in the Probolinggo District. Here, I take the opportunity to correct the type locality to Bengawan (= river) Solo, between Kalitidu and Padangan, Bojonegoro District, East Java (see Table 1 for further details of the MZB specimens).

The specimen from Tanjung Priok was identified and reported under the name of *Pelochelys cantorii* by Ouwens (1914). This paper has been overlooked by many authors, but eventually used by de Rooij (1915) although she did not examine the specimen. Unfortunately McCord and Pritchard (2003 "2002") overlooked Iskandar's (2000) comment, where he states that the only record of *Pelochelys* from Java is based on Ouwens' publication. Their treatment of *Chitra minor* Jaekel, 1911 as conspecific with Javan *Pelochelys cantorii*, a record that was based on de Rooij's monograph, is questionable. The sole

TABLE 1: Detailed information about *Chitra chitra javanensis* specimens in MZB. Abbreviations.- TCL = total carapacial length; CL = carapacial bone length at the vertebrae region; CW = carapacial bone width at the widest part. CWR = total carapacial bone width including the ribs measured at the widest part; *) specimens no 029 and 199 were measured after being stuffed, so that CL and CW could not be measured accurately, CWR of these specimens were measured at the widest part of the stuffed carapace.

MZB Test.	Locality	Donor	Date	Notes	Measurement (mm*)
027 whole mount	Tanjung Priok	A. C. Buisson	1908 (no exact date)	Caught at harbour (sea)	TCL: 1290; CL: ?; CW: 735; CWR: 740
199 (Holotype) whole mount	Bengawan Solo, between Kalitidu and Padangan, Bojonegoro District, East Java	F.B. Yuwono	1999 (no exact date)	Caught during dry season	TCL: 570; CL: ?; CW ?; CWR: 470
264, 265 (paratypes) alcoholic	Lecces, near Pasuruan, Probolinggo District, East Java	W. McCord & party	July 1997	Caught during dry season	
266, 267 (paratypes) skeleton	Lecces, near Pasuruan, Probolinggo District, East Java	W. McCord & party	July 1997	Caught during dry season	
293 skeleton	Jalan Radio Dalam, South Jakarta	Jack West (Ragunan Zoological Park)	December 1977	Caught after Ciliwung river flooding	TCL: 1100; CL: 540; CW: 560; CWR: 630
294 skeleton	Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta	Jack West (Ragunan Zoological Park)	November 1978	Caught after Ciliwung river flooding	TCL: 1170; CL: 560; CW: 590; CWR: 660
295 skeleton	Bengawan Solo, between Kalitidu and Padangan, Bojonegoro District, East Java	F.B. Yuwono	1987 (no exact date)	Caught during dry season	TCL: >1200; CL: 640; CW: 650; CWR 720

presumed Javanese *Pelochelys* ever recorded from Java is actually a specimen of *C. chitra javanensis*. At present, there is no evidence of the occurrence of *Pelochelys* in Java.

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