



Title	Impacts of illegal trapping on endangered big-headed turtles (<i>Platysternon megacephalum</i>) in Hong Kong
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Impacts of Illegal Trapping on Endangered Big-headed Turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) in Hong Kong

Big-headed Turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) inhabit fast flowing streams at high altitudes in South-east Asia and is regularly recorded in the wildlife trade in China and Hong Kong. Its populations are experiencing drastic declines and this species is listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Given existing pressures on its populations and the rarity of this species in mainland China, there is an urgent need to understand the ecology and population status of this poorly-known species. In Hong Kong, where populations still exist, we used mark-recapture methods to investigate the impacts of illegal trapping on this species by comparing demographic characteristics between sites with trapping history and one site in a fully protected area. In addition, we conducted radio-telemetry to study their home range, movements and habitat use. Our results revealed that large adults were underrepresented in sites where traps were found in the past and this was likely caused by overharvesting. Long-term monitoring of populations of this species is essential to track immediate and long-term effects of illegal collection. The information obtained through this study will allow us to develop a plan that will aid local conservation efforts for this species in Hong Kong.