

Cuban slider and common cooter at MacRitchie Reservoir

Subjects: Common cooter, *Pseudemys floridana* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae) [Fig. 1 & 2];
Red-eared slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae) [Fig. 1];
Cuban slider, *Trachemys decussata* (Reptilia: Testudines: Emydidae) [Fig. 3].

Subjects identified by: Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, MacRitchie Reservoir; 25 February 2015, between 1240 and 1250 hrs.

Habitat: Artificial freshwater lake surrounded by secondary forest.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A turtle, possibly a common cooter, of about 40 cm carapace length (Fig. 1 & 2), and a Cuban slider of about 25 cm carapace length (Fig. 3), were observed basking on logs floating on the water alongside at least two red-eared sliders (Fig. 1).

Remarks: The largest turtle in Fig. 1 and also on Fig. 2 is tentatively identified as *Pseudemys floridana*, the common cooter, on account of its relatively large size (up to 40 cm carapace length); carapace being highly arched with slightly serrated posterior rim, each marginal scute with a central yellow bar on its dorsal surface and a light-centred dark spot over the posterior seam on the ventral surface. Diagnostic markings not discernible from the featured specimen include a transverse stripe on the second pleural scute on the carapace, and yellow plastron without dark pattern (Ernst & Barbour, 1989: 212). The specimen featured here resembles the *Pseudemys floridana floridana* illustrated in Ernst & Barbour (1989: 212) but is unlike the 'brightly coloured' specimen shown in Bonin et al. (2006: 391). Its larger size, convex carapace, lack of red blotch behind the eye distinguish it from the red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) on Fig. 1. All three species of turtle are native to North America, and the featured individuals are believed to be abandoned pets.

References:

- Bonin, F., B. Devaux & A. Dupré, 2006. *Turtles of the World*. English translation. A & C Black Publishers Ltd., London. 416 pp.
Ernst, C. H. & R. W. Barbour, 1989. *Turtles of the World*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.. xii + 313 pp.



Fig. 1. Possible common cooter (far right) basking alongside two red-eared sliders. Photograph by Nick Baker



Fig. 2. This example is tentatively identified as a common cooter, *Pseudemys floridana*.



Fig. 3. Cuban slider basking on a log.

Photographs by Nick Baker

Contributor: Nick **Baker**

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