From 25th February to 3rd March 2015, the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) in collaboration with Kim Sơn commune Youth Union organized the fifth football event to promote the world’s rarest turtle, the Hoan Kiem turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*).

Only four individuals of the species are known to exist in the world, of those, two individual are living in Suzhou zoo, China; two are living in Vietnam with one known as the “Cụ Rùa” (Grandfather Turtle) in Hanoi’s Hoan Kiem lake and one in Dong Mo lake, Son Tay district, Hanoi, Vietnam.

The turtle which live in Dong Mo Lake was rescued and released after its escape and capture by locals down-stream from its lake home in flood 2008. The ATP has undertaken awareness and local community activities since 2007 to promote protection of the turtle in Dong Mo lake. These have included the annually football event, boat races, radio announcements, posters, signboards, art competitions. In addition the last 3 months has also seen the creation of a no fishing zone to recover the fish stock and reduce fishing activities in the favorite location of turtle as well as the construction of a sand bank to provide the turtle with a suitable nesting location or basking site. A permanent team is maintained at the lake for monitoring and observations and to support community activities.

The annual ‘Turtle Cup’ football match has now been held for 6 consecutive years. 2015 was the first year where private sponsorship for teams was made possible to support some costs of running this event, we would like to thank Mr Chris Banks from Zoos Victoria, Australia for sponsoring his private team (Kim Dai II) and Vietcraft Ltd (Dong Mo Fisherman Team).

The players competed hard to become the new turtle cup champion.

From 25th February to 3rd March 2015, the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) in collaboration with Kim Sơn commune Youth Union organized the fifth football event to promote the world’s rarest turtle, the Hoan Kiem turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*). Only four individuals of the species are known to exist in the world, of those, two individual are living in Suzhou zoo, China; two are living in Vietnam with one known as the “Cụ Rùa” (Grandfather Turtle) in Hanoi’s Hoan Kiem lake and one in Dong Mo lake, Son Tay district, Hanoi, Vietnam.

The turtle which live in Dong Mo Lake was rescued and released after its escape and capture by locals down-stream from its lake home in flood 2008. The ATP has undertaken awareness and local community activities since 2007 to promote protection of the turtle in Dong Mo lake. These have included the annually football event, boat races, radio announcements, posters, signboards, art competitions. In addition the last 3 months has also seen the creation of a no fishing zone to recover the fish stock and reduce fishing activities in the favorite location of turtle as well as the construction of a sand bank to provide the turtle with a suitable nesting location or basking site. A permanent team is maintained at the lake for monitoring and observations and to support community activities.

The annual ‘Turtle Cup’ football match has now been held for 6 consecutive years. 2015 was the first year where private sponsorship for teams was made possible to support some costs of running this event, we would like to thank Mr Chris Banks from Zoos Victoria, Australia for sponsoring his private team (Kim Dai II) and Vietcraft Ltd (Dong Mo Fisherman Team).
The football match this year involved 8 local teams come from villages around Dong Mo lake. These are Nghia Son, Kim Dai I, Kim Dai II, Kim Chung, Kim Tan, Nha Tho, Long Ho and the Dong Mo Fisherman team. After having a week of excited competition, the final match was between Kim Tan village and Dong Mo Fisherman team. This match was called by local people “Cuộc Chiến của thần Núi-Sơn Tinh và thần Nước-Thủy Tinh”, “The battle between the of Mountain God-Son Tinh and Water God-Thuy Tinh”. A tough first half left the team drawing 0:0, but as gameplay exploded in the second half with some players tiring the final result was 2:1 to the victorious Son Tinh - God of mountain team (Kim Tan Village). Over 600 spectators watch the final match in this exciting event which has grown in popularity each year. With the Kim Tan team emerging as new champions of 2015.

“...It has been an amazing football match. I loved it. It not only give the chance for players to show off their strength but also give the local people the time to relax after hard days working. We also highly appreciate the information you gave about “Con Giai” (local name of Rafetus swinhoei in Dong Mo) in Dong Mo lake. We are so proud that we have a sacred turtle here. Follow my fishing experience, I strongly believe that at least 3 animal different in size in this lake.” Nguyen Van Hai - a fisherman from Dong Mo and spectator.