Kids Football matches for turtle conservation in Dong Mo Lake, Vietnam

From the 13th July to the 12th August 2017, the Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC) worked with the Youth Union of local communes surrounding Dong Mo Lake near Hanoi in Vietnam to organize football matches for local children. The football is used as a way to promote conservation of the world’s rarest turtle, the Hoan Kiem turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*).

A total of 15 teams, with seven 11-14 years old each, from 15 villages in two communes enjoyed the matches. This event have received great attention from local people with each match watched by approximately 600-700 spectators.

“This is the third kids football matches held in Yen Bai and Kim Son communes to raise awareness and promote conservation work of *Rafetus swinhoei* in these priority communities. Similar to others community activities, this event is increasingly getting more local attentions, a good thing for our community activity efforts”, said Nguyen Tai Thang, *Rafetus* project field officer.

Press release by: Hoang Van Ha – ATP/IMC.
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For further information, please contact:

Asian Turtle Program - Indo-Myanmar Conservation
Room 1806, C14 Bac Ha Building, To Huu street,
Nam Tu Liem district, Hanoi, Vietnam
PO Box 46
Tel: +84 (0) 24 7302 8389
Email: info@asianturtleprogram.org
Website: www.asianturtleprogram.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/AsianTurtleProgram

Above: The kids football match has been one of the first community activities to raise awareness to Swinhoe’s Softshell Turtle (Rafetus swinhoei) in Yen Bai commune, with most previous activities held in neighbouring Kim Son commune. Photo by Nguyen Tai Thang – ATP/IMC.

Picture (right): At each game, approx. 600-700 spectators came to support their teams, including a lot of proud parents. Photo by Nguyen Tai Thang – ATP/IMC.

Above: Prizes included framed pictures of the famous turtle from Dong Mo Lake. Photo by Nguyen Tai Thang – ATP/IMC.