

Near-extinct turtle bred on Bangladesh beach

June 11 2012



A worker holds a river terrapins (scientific name *Batagur baska*) at an animal sanctuary in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2002. The critically endangered turtle species has been bred for the first time by zoologists using an artificial beach in Bangladesh, specialists announced on Monday.

Zoologists have for the first time bred a critically endangered turtle species using an artificial beach, Bangladeshi specialists announced on Monday.

The northern river terrapin, scientific name *Batagur baska*, is extinct in the wild in Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam, and survives only in tiny numbers in [Bangladesh](#), India, Malaysia and Indonesia.

But 25 [turtles](#) hatched last week at a beach built on the banks of two ponds in Bangladesh's Bhawal National Park to encourage their parents, which had been captured from the wild, to breed in a safe environment.

"The female turtles laid eggs and last week 25 turtles cubs were hatched," said S.M.A. Rashid, head of the Centre for Advanced Research in Natural Resources and Management, a private wildlife group.

"They are tiny but doing fine."

The organisation had "scoured Bangladesh's coastal districts in the south and collected 14 males and five females", he said, and worked with the US-based Turtles Survival Alliance, Bangladesh's forest department and Vienna Zoo.

The Austrian institution bred the turtles in a laboratory two years ago and hatched two babies but one later died.

In its most recent report on the species in 2000 the International Union for [Conservation of Nature](#) listed it as critically endangered because of [habitat loss](#), illegal hunting and export to China.

Monirul Khan, Bangladesh's leading wildlife professor, told AFP the breeding breakthrough gave the species "the biggest hope for survival against all the odds".

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