

Death of rare turtle leaves 3 remaining in the world

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In this April 7, 2016, photo, researchers lift a female Yangtze giant softshell turtle out of the water at a zoo in Suzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu province. The only known female member of one of the world's rarest turtle species has died at a zoo in southern China, officials said Sunday, April 14, 2019. (Chinatopix via AP)

The only known female member of one of the world's rarest turtle species has died at a zoo in southern China, officials said Sunday.

The animal was one of four Yangtze giant softshell turtles known to be remaining in the world. The Suzhou zoo, where the female turtle lived, also houses a male Yangtze giant softshell turtle. The other two live in Vietnam, but their genders are unknown.

The turtle died Saturday afternoon, the Suzhou city government said in a statement, citing the zoo. It said experts have already used technology to collect the turtle's ovarian tissue for [future research](#).

The state-run People's Daily reported that the turtle was over 90 years old and had undergone a fifth attempt at artificial insemination shortly before she died.

A [medical examination](#) found the turtle to be in good health prior to the procedure, the People's Daily said, and the [artificial insemination](#) appeared to go smoothly. But the turtle died the following day.

Yangtze giant softshell turtles originated in China, making their homes in the Yangtze River and Taihu Lake, according to the People's Daily. The species is often referred to as the most endangered turtle in the world.

Suzhou authorities said Chinese and foreign experts are investigating the cause of the turtle's death.



In this May 6, 2015, photo, researchers attempt artificial insemination on a female Yangtze giant softshell turtle at a zoo in Suzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu province. The only known female member of one of the world's rarest turtle species has died at a zoo in southern China, officials said Sunday, April 14, 2019. (Chinatopix via AP)

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