



First Record of the Exotic Red-eared Slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans* (Wied 1838) (Emydidae), from Mizoram, India

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Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), which are native to the United States and northern Mexico (Powell et al. 2016), are extremely popular pets due to their small size, easy maintenance, and relatively low cost (Teillac-Deschamps et al. 2008). Consequently, they have become the most widely introduced turtle (Ramsay et al. 2007), with populations established on every continent except Antarctica (Kraus 2009) and listed among the world’s 100 worst invasive alien species (Lowe et al. 2000). As these turtles grow to carapace lengths of 20–30 cm, they become increasingly difficult to maintain in captivity and often are released into nature by owners unaware of the adverse effects on natural ecosystems (Teillac-Deschamps et al. 2008).

Herein we report the first record of the Red-eared Slider from Mizoram, India. On 25 July 2020, we collected a subadult female (carapace length 17.0 cm and width 16.5 cm, plastron length 16.0 cm and width 11.0 cm, weight 715 g; Fig. 1) from a stream on a farm owned by Mr. Thanglianchhunga at Tlangveng, Chawlhmun, Aizawl, Mizoram, India (23.743548°N, 92.692986°E; WGS 84; 917 m asl). The area is covered by secondary forest in which an unnamed stream joins the Tuithum Stream about 105 m and then the Tlawng River about 4.5 km to the southwest of the collection site. A photographic voucher was submitted to the

Natural History Museum of Mizoram, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram, India (NHMM/G/1). The identity of the species was confirmed by Dr. Jayaditya Purkayastha, Help Earth, Guwahati, Assam, India.

Fourteen species of chelonians have been recorded from Mizoram (Pawar and Choudhury 2000; Matthew 2007; Hmar et al. 2020), which is one of the most biotically diverse areas in the country (Pawar and Birand 2001). The introduction of Red-eared Sliders during the past five years is likely to be highly detrimental to populations of native species. In addition to compliance with plans for the conservation of indigenous species, strict environmental laws regulating the introduction of invasive species are urgently required.

Acknowledgements

We thank the Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Mizoram, for permission to collect herpetofauna in Mizoram (Memo No: A. 33011/2/99–CWLW/225). We acknowledge the National Mission for Himalayan Studies (NMHS), Utarakhand, DST-SERB (EMEQ), and Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi, for financial assistance. We also appreciate Tlauliana for contributing the photograph.

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Fig. 1. A subadult female Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) collected in Tlangveng, Chawlhmun, Aizawl, Mizoram. Photograph by Tlauliana.

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