



# New Locality Record of Endangered *Cuora mouhotii* (Gray 1862) from Doimara Reserve Forest, Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India

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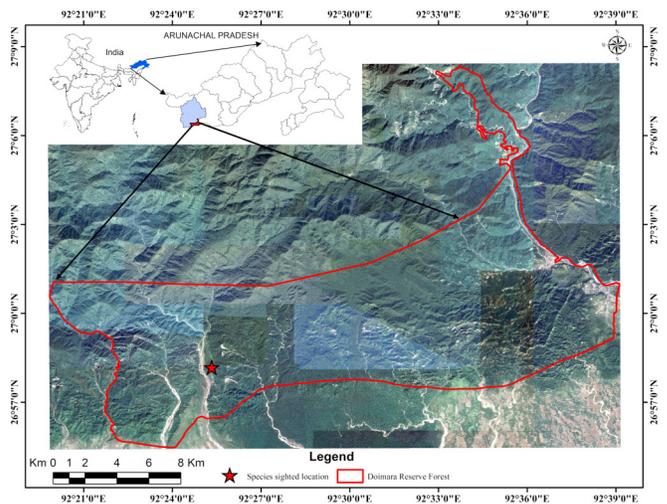
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*Cuora mouhotii* (Gray 1862) is an endangered Geomydidae turtle that is endemic to Asia (Ahmed et al. 2020). There are two currently recognized subspecies, *Cuora mouhotii mouhotii* (Gray 1863) and *Cuora mouhotii obsti* (Fritz et al. 1998), but only *C. m. mouhotii* is known to occur in India (Rhodin et al. 2021). This species has only been recorded from a few locations in Northeast India; however, precise locality data for these records has not often been reported (Das 1990; Pawar and Birand 2001; Sinha et al. 2021).

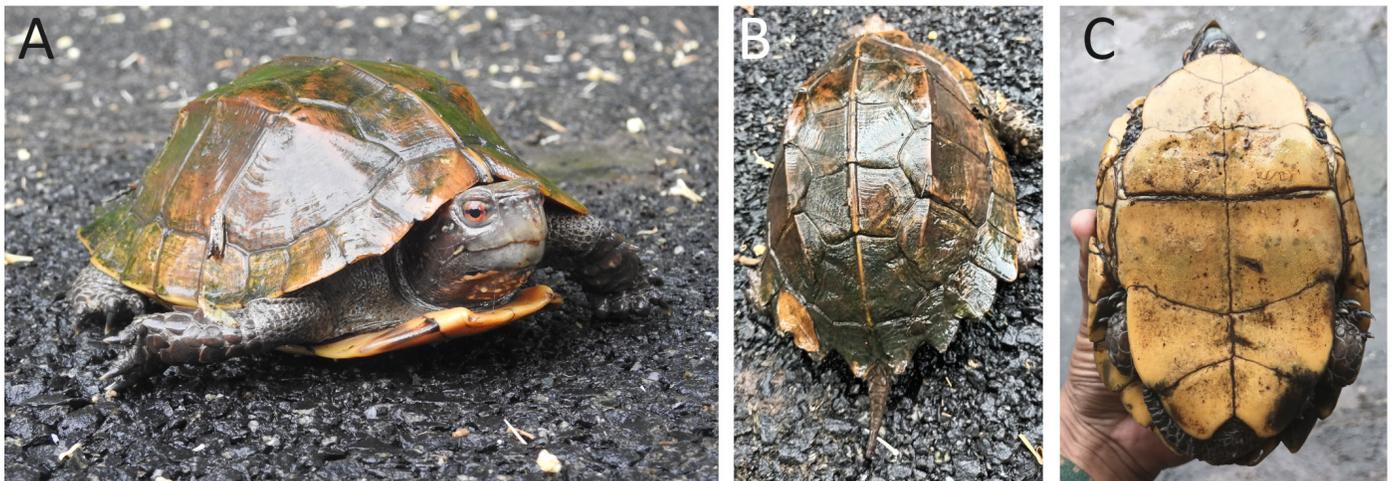
At 1130 h on 10 May 2022, during heavy rain, we encountered a single turtle near Sarahor Village in the Doimara Reserve Forest (26°58'10.91" N 92°25'19.76" E; elev. 337 m asl) (Fig. 1), West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh. The reserve is located in the undulating and mountainous terrain of the Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot. The turtle was identified as *Cuora mouhotii* as it was a medium-sized (curved carapace length up to 18 cm) terrestrial turtle, with a tail extending beyond the length of the plastron, a flat-topped, tricarinate shell with serrated posterior marginal scutes, a long and narrow nuchal shield, a short but prominent bridge and a highly hooked upper jaw (Das et al. 2016) (Fig. 2A-C). The turtle was attempting to cross a road in the direction of the Bisiri Khorong River. The habitat on either side of the road consisted of tropical semi-evergreen forest with areas of tropical evergreen and subtropical broad-leaf forest on the hilltops and at higher elevations. Bamboo, cane brakes, and palms were observed in the riparian area. Later that day, we conducted informal interviews among the local community in Sarahor Village near to Doimara Reserve Forest and showed community members photographs of the

species. According to the local community, the species is only seen on rare occasions in the forest. This is to our knowledge the first record of *C. mouhotii* in Doimara Reserve Forest.

This new site record is approximately 75 km away from the nearest reported locality, Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary (Pawar and Birand 2001). Further research should focus on assessing the population at this specific site and its threats, as this species is known to be exploited in Northeast India (Ahmed and Das 2010). Furthermore, conservation planning and recovery efforts can be facilitated if additional effort is made to further delimit the range of this endangered species in Northeast India.



**Fig. 1.** Map illustrating the new locality of *Cuora mouhotii* in Doimara Reserve Forest, Arunachal Pradesh.



**Fig. 2.** *Cuora mouhotii* encountered in Doimara Reserve Forest, Arunachal Pradesh— **A.** dorsolateral view, **B.** carapace, and **C.** plastron. Photographs by Genius Teron.

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