

Abstract

Malaysian Giant Turtle (*Orlitia borneensis*) is a poorly known turtle with rapidly declining numbers in nature. Most animals of this species kept in European zoos and included in captive breeding programs are confiscated from illegal trade and their locality of origin and taxonomic status are unknown. This study was aimed to assess genetic variation in founders of this population. We sequenced genes for the mitochondrial cytochrome b and found 23 haplotypes. The maximum sequence divergence was less than 1.5% and the phylogenetic structure of the haplotypes was only poorly supported. A close genetic similarity among sampled turtles was further confirmed by a sequencing of the nuclear R35 gene. Thus, the examined population of *O. borneensis* may be further treated as a single conservation unit.