

YELLOW-HEADED TEMPLE TURTLE



What do they look like?

The yellow-headed temple turtle (*Hieremys annandalii*) has a dark, elongated and raised carapace (shell) and a grey head, speckled yellow and black. The serrated jaws are yellow and look like sharp fangs, hence its Vietnamese name. The carapace measures up to 50 cm.

Where do they live?

This species is found in the lowlands of southern Vietnam. It is also known from Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and may occur in Peninsular Malaysia and Myanmar.

How do they live?

An aquatic species, this turtle prefers ponds, marshes and slow-moving water. It is one of the species that are ritually released into ponds near Buddhist temples, hence its English name.

What do they eat?

These turtles are herbivores. They eat water lilies and other floating or overhanging plants.

Why are they in danger?

Yellow-headed temple turtles appear on Vietnam's Red List and are protected under Decree 32. Despite their protected status, they are still illegally harvested for their meat, turned into soup, or used in traditional Chinese medicine. They are also threatened by habitat loss.

How can we save them?

Wildlife At Risk (WAR) and organisations like the Asian Turtle Conservation Network are fighting to stop the illegal trade by helping local authorities to enforce the law, protect turtles in the wild and confiscate them from traders. You can help us by NOT eating turtles, NOT buying turtles and NOT buying other products made from turtles.