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Die Gelbrand-Scharnierschildkröte der Ryukyu-Inseln – *Cuora flavomarginata evelynae*

The yellow-margined box turtle of the Ryukyu Islands – *Cuora flavomarginata evelynae*

Abstract

The yellow-margined box turtle lives on mainland China, Taiwan and Ryukyu-islands in southern Japan. The turtles of the Ryukyu Islands were first described in 1990 as *Cuora evelynae* and a year later, reviewed as a subspecies of *Cuora flavomarginata*.

The turtle inhabit 2 small islands, Ishigaki and Iriomote, about 250 kilometres east of Taiwan. The mountainous islands are covered by subtropical primary forests and there are many rivers and streams. Yellow-margined box turtle live in the herbaceous undergrowth of these forests. The summer is long and hot, the winter is short and mild. The rainy season occurs during the summer.

Three specimens of *C. f. evelynae* are kept by the author, separated from 2 groups of other *C. flavomarginata*. Comparing the latter with *C. f. evelynae*, there are clear differences in carapace and head colouration. The lateral keels of *C. f. evelynae* are more clearly elaborated and the light spots on the costal shields can form a lateral stripe. The side of the head is not orange but yellow or pale yellow. After 3-months hibernation, the female *C. f. evelynae* produces 1-3 clutches. The clutch size varies from 1-4 eggs. Incubation at 26-28 °C lasts 74-77 days. Three turtles hatched in 2003.

Two months later, differences with the hatchlings of the other *Cuora flavomarginata* were evident. The middle keel is not a continuous stripe but notched. The centres of the scutes became lighter. At this age juvenile *C. f. evelynae* were able to move their plastron hinge.

Key words

Testudines: Bataguridae, *Cuora flavomarginata evelynae*, systematic aspects, morphological separation, keeping under captive conditions, reproduction, artificial incubation.

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