Project Update: February 2016

So far, the survey has been completed in 14 temple ponds in Assam, India. The assessments of diversity of freshwater turtles in all these temple ponds have been completed successfully.

Sl No.	Name of temple pond	District	Number of species
1	Shree shree Dhareshwar Devalaya, Siliguri (Bamundi)	Kamrup	7
2	Hayagriva Madhab temple pond	Kamrup	13
3	Kedareswara Temple pond	Kamrup	6
4	Ugratara Dewalay temple pond	Kamrup	6
5	Kamakhya temple pond	Kamrup	7
6	Sivasagar tank	Sibsagar	9*
7	Joysagar tank	Sibsagar	8*
8	Rudrasagar tank	Sibsagar	7*
9	Gaurisagar tank	Sibsagar	7*
10	Haleswar Devalaya	Sonitpur	6
11	Nag-Sankar temple pond	Sonitpur	9
12	Gupteswar Devalaya, Singari	Sonitpur	3
13	Khatara Satra pond	Darrang	5
14	Gorokhiya Gosai than, temple pond, Sorbhog	Barpeta	8

*Ponds are too large and the number projected here is as per questionnaire and photo-sheet survey with local people.

Habitat quality and current threats to turtle habitats are being assessed at regular s in each of the temple ponds surveyed. Some of the habitat threats so far observed in most of the ponds surveyed in Kamrup and Sonitpur districts are: pollution caused by devotees providing food to turtles (creating a layer of oil on water from biscuits and plastic bags in the water); increased competition for food by large population of prolific breeding fish tilapia and common carp; injury to the turtles by carnivorous fish; presence of toxic algae; severe parasitic infection; low dissolved oxygen during continuous rain; and poor basking space.

Some of the local youths have trained in turtle field survey methods and are motivated towards assisting in temple pond habitat management.

A turtle infected by large number of parasites and fungus due to poor basking space