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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Palawan Forest Turtle / Philippine Pond Turtle placed Number 6 in the 2017 Love Species Campaign

February 14, 2017 – Valentine’s Day. Katala Foundation Inc had nominated the Palawan endemic freshwater turtle *Siebenrockiella leytensis*, also know under the English common names Palawan Forest Turtle, Philippine Forest Turtle or Philippine Pond Turtle to join Wildscreen Arkive’s 2017 Love Species campaign (<http://www.arkive.org/lovespecies-2017/>).

Within only two weeks, the campaign had received over 4,500 votes from people in 112 different countries around the world. On top of this, the campaign was featured on the Guardian website and was shared over 2,500 times and is estimated to have reached over 20 million people across all social media platforms.

Our nominee has reached the top 10, placing number 6 out of 23 species. It was the only reptile among 8 mammals and one bird that had reached the top 10!

Thanks to all who voted and showed their love for this critically endangered and yet not well-known species.

Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI) has adopted *Siebenrockiella leytensis* as one of its flag ship species in 2006. It is the focal species of the Philippine Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program for which KFI and DENR-BMB signed a Memorandum of Agreement in the same year. In 2007, KFI established quarantine, rescue and holding facilities at the Katala Institute for Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation in Narra, Palawan, where the only range assurance colony of *Siebenrockiella leytensis* is maintained. In partnership with academic institutions and wildlife agencies on Palawan, KFI is leading public awareness campaigns that are designed to improve law enforcement against illegal wildlife trade. Likewise, KFI conducts scientific research on the management of Philippine fresh-water turtles and their habitats, and educates and capacitates stakeholders on natural resource management and conservation, and restoration of the species’ habitats.

Distribution surveys and long-term studies on population trends, ecology, and life history of the Palawan forest turtle are also being undertaken since 2007. And the first protected area for a freshwater turtle in the Philippines was established in 2013.

For more information, please contact Sabine Schoppe, Katala Foundation, P.O. Box 390, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan or at sabine_schoppe@web.de and visit our homepage at www.philippinecockatoo.org.

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