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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Colorado Reptile Humane Society Provides Emergency Sheltering for Illegal Chinese Turtles Seized from Denver International Airport**

***More Than 50 Soft-Shelled Turtles to be Sheltered for Months***

LONGMONT, CO (March 19, 2009) – Colorado Reptile Humane Society received 50 Asian soft-shelled turtles (*Pelodiscus sinensis*) seized by US Fish and Wildlife inspectors at Denver International Airport. The turtles, illegally imported from Thailand, were headed for a Denver-area pet store which did not have proper permits. Turtles under 4” in carapace length (top shell) may not be imported according to FDA regulations. The 50 very young turtles are near 1” in length and weigh less than 5 grams each. As adults, they may measure 12” in length and live to 15 years.

“The mass breeding of reptiles causes tragic suffering for the animals that are trapped in those inhumane situations, and it adds to the already critical problem of pet overpopulation,” said Colorado Reptile Humane Society’s executive director, Ann-Elizabeth Nash. “We are glad that federal authorities have taken action in this case, and we urge the authorities in other communities to move swiftly and take similar action whenever evidence of illegal importation is brought to their attention.”

The Asian soft-shelled turtle, farmed in many countries, is often available in the US pet trade. This turtle inhabits freshwater rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams and eats a variety of snails, fishes, shrimps, crabs, and aquatic plants. Colorado Reptile Humane Society will shelter and care for the turtles until they are stable and large enough to adopt.

This soft-shelled turtle has been used for as a food product in China. It is also used for Chinese traditional medicine including virility treatments.

**About Colorado Reptile Humane Society**

As the leading animal welfare organization for reptiles and amphibians in the Rocky Mountain region, Colorado Reptile Humane Society has been helping pets and people in Colorado and beyond for more than 10 years. Colorado Reptile Humane Society’s shelter is located in Longmont. For more information about Colorado Reptile Humane Society, visit [corhs.org](http://corhs.org).

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