



### **Chromatic leucism in the flap shell turtle, *Lissemys punctata* from Bangladesh**

The spotted flap shell turtle, *Lissemys punctata* (Bonnaterre, 1789) has a distribution in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan (Rahman *et al.* 2021). In Bangladesh, this species is widely distributed throughout the freshwater wetlands and the low-lying floodplains, coastal islands, and hill districts (Rahman *et al.* 2015). This species is listed in CITES (Appendix II) and protected by Bangladesh Wildlife Conservation & Security Act 2012 (Schedule II), where commercial trade is strictly prohibited. *Lissemys punctata* has an oval and domed carapace with olive-green colour spotted by dark yellow blotches (Fig. 1A). The head is also olive green often with yellow blotches, whereas the plastron is whitish or pale yellow (Khan 2018). The colour of this species may vary depending on its habitat and defence strategy. Colour aberration in animals may occur due to a lack of melanin. Golden yellow colour aberration (chromatic leucism) is rare in animals, especially in turtles (Devkota *et al.* 2020). This might be because of the absence of melanin in the outer dermis (Bechtel 1991). The presence of high xanthophores and yellow pteridine pigments in the skin are also responsible for the golden yellow colour aberration. We observed a golden leucistic *L. punctata* (carapace length ~228 mm, head ~76 mm) in Char Bhasania Village (23°48'42.2"N, 90°43'49.2"E), Madhabdi, Narsingdi District on 15 June 2020 at about 16:45 h. (Fig. 1B). The animal was found moving slowly on the bank of a pond. Upon spotting the animal, we photographed it using a Samsung A50 Phone. The entire body of the specimen was golden in colour, which indicates chromatic leucism in *L. punctata*. We also observed a second leucistic individual from a canal in Faridpur Sadar (23°36'13.9"N, 89°48'57.3"E), Faridpur District on 22 August 2021 (Fig. 1C). Golden leucism was previously recorded in two individuals of *L.*

*punctata* from India (Gupta & Guy 2020) and Nepal (Devkota *et al.* 2020). This phenomenon was previously unknown in Bangladesh.

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**Figure 1.** *Lissemys punctata* individual with (A) normal colouration; and golden leucistic at (B) Bhasania Village, Madhabdi, Narsingdi District, and (C) Faridpur Sadar, Faridpur District, Bangladesh.