

Sea Turtles of the Indo-Pacific

Research Management & Conservation



Edited by
Nicolas Pilcher & Ghazally Ismail



UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA
SARAWAK

ASEAN ACADEMIC PRESS

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Preface

Sometime in late 1998 we were in a meeting with Datuk Lamri Ali, the Director of Sabah Parks, discussing sea turtle conservation issues, the lack of data and information sharing among local and regional scientists and managers, and the need for a training workshop for some of the Park rangers. From this meeting blossomed the idea for the 2nd ASEAN Symposium and Workshop on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, and from that point onward the event took on a life of its own. Adopting the theme "Beyond the beach", the meeting had among its main objectives to highlight the fact that turtle conservation should be seen as more than working simply on nesting beaches, and that the migratory movements, genetic research and broad scale, international collaboration was essential for protecting these migratory giants.

The Symposium, which was held from 15 to 17 July 1999, brought together nearly 150 local and international participants, including highly respected scientists, government representatives, the tourism sector, Park Rangers, and people who just cared about sea turtle. Never had we anticipated the keen interest that was shown by the international community, or the role the meeting was to play in further conservation activities. Over 40 presentations and several posters provided a wealth of information on current research, management and conservation issues that spanned the Indo-Pacific region, and from these we have endeavoured to produce this volume.

The book is now one of the most up-to-date sources of information on sea turtle projects in the region, and serves as a useful guide to literature which was previously unknown. The chapters contained herein are both informative and useful to scientists, managers, legislators, and for anyone who wants to learn more about sea turtles in the region, or in general. For example, Jeanette Wyneken warns of conservation practices that, though with good intentions, may not always be in the better interest of turtles: "commonly used management tools ... may 'short-circuit' normal developmental events by depriving turtles of essential experiences". Jeanne Mortimer's work on movements of turtles using satellite telemetry in the Seychelles "confirms the need for regional cooperation to ensure effective management of hawksbill populations". The book lists in many cases the exact legislation that governs the use or protection of turtle, and provides a

fascinating and informative history of the use of Trawler Excluder Devices, or TEDs, and the recent WTO trade issues.

Section 1 on Management and Conservation contains papers that describe the conservation status and management approaches in a number of ASEAN and non-ASEAN nations. Section 2 on Nesting and Foraging Populations describes a number of sea turtle populations in the Indo-Pacific area. Section 3 follows the main theme of the conference, and highlights the fact that many conservation and management approaches are not necessarily beach-based, such as hatcheries and incubators. Section 4 covers research and management on turtle populations before they enter the sea as hatchlings, while Section 5 deals with ways in which we may help turtle populations. Finally, Section 6 discusses TEDs and the road ahead, a major issue in today's turtle conservation efforts, and particularly after the recent USA/Asia market disputes.

The overwhelming acceptance of what has become known as the Sabah Declaration, calling for the establishment of a broad agreement on cooperation, that expanded upon the existing ASEAN Memorandum of Understanding on Sea Turtle Conservation to encompass the Indian Ocean and Australia, was among the first steps in developing such an agreement. Since then, the first dialogue session on the development of such an agreement was hosted in Perth, Australia, in October 1999, and the second round of talks is scheduled for July 2000, to be hosted by Malaysia.

We are honoured to present here the work of some truly outstanding people.

*Nicolas Pilcher
Ghazally Ismail
June 2000*

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