Nesting Beach Conservation: A Community-Based Approach for Sea Turtle Recovery in the Pacific

THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Introduction

Sea turtles are long-lived species that regulate vast distances from nesting beaches, through the high seas to foraging habitats. Consequently, a collaborative approach among nations is essential for conservation. Six species of sea turtles occur in the Pacific Ocean; all are endangered or threatened with extinction.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC), established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, is one of eight councils in the United States, one of which manages the nation’s fisheries in the Western Pacific Region. Management objectives are to achieve optimum yield while operating best practice marine resource utilization.

WPRFMC SUPPORTED TURTLE PROJECTS

Nesting Beaches

- **Ningaloo Reef, Australia**
- **Vogelkop Coast, Indonesia**
- **Huon Coast, PNG**
- **Warmon beach, Papua New Guinea**
- **Mae Haad, Thailand**

In Collaboration With

- **Caretta caretta Foundation**
- **Painted Turtle Recovery Project**
- **WWF**

FORAGING HABITATS

- **Baja California, Mexico**
- **Vogelkop, Indonesia**
- **Kei Islands, Western Papua, Indonesia**
- **South Pacific Tuna Commission**
- **Guam**

Elements of a Nesting Beach Project

1. **Monitoring and Research**

Through community-based monitoring and research, local people become actively involved in sea turtle conservation. Research activities include tagging, beach surveys. Long-term monitoring provides valuable information such as population size, recruitment, annual survival rates, reproductive success, and population trend over time.

2. **Education and Outreach**

Facilitates public awareness and community involvement. Through education and outreach, individuals learn the global impact of sea turtles and can make responsible decisions about marine resource utilization.

3. **Beach Management**

Beach management activities include predation mitigation and habitat protection by controlling human-related threats associated with beach use, and reducing near-seasom-related impacts from beach access, habitat loss, and human activities. Beach management can increase hatchling survival and population recovery by adding turtles to the populations that would have otherwise been lost.

Favorable nesting habitat is critical for sea turtle reproduction and is central to the survival of sea turtles populations.
Leatherback turtles. Projects to conserve endangered leatherback and hawksbill turtles in Indonesia, and villagers of the Huon Coast of Papua New Guinea, are now participating in a community-based turtle project in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society and PNG’s Department of Environment & Conservation.

Today, villagers recognize the global impact of local actions. They have employed egg herders and are employing sea-scouts, who collect valuable data and are expanding our understanding of the nesting dynamics of the western Pacific leatherback.

Reversing traditional laws and practices with sustainable, eco-friendly, and nonprofit practices, people are profiting and protecting turtles. Ell-Fabick in Kei Islands, Western Papua, has joined the international movement to save sea turtles and to protect turtle beaches for future generations.

Favorable nesting habitat is critical for sea turtle reproduction and is central to the survival of sea turtle populations. Today, the WPRFMC, along with its partners, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC), the U.S. federal authority for the Pacific Islands Region, recognizes the importance of community involvement, however, for children. Through education and outreach activities, including tagging, training, and increasing awareness, local people become actively engaged in conservation. Beach management objectives are to achieve sustained yields while supporting local communities and environmentally responsible fisheries.