



# **Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding**

## **Assessment of the conservation status of the leatherback turtle in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia**

### **IOSEA Species Assessment: Volume I**

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## Preface

The IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding ([www.ioseaturtles.org](http://www.ioseaturtles.org)) puts in place a framework through which States of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia region, as well as other concerned States, can work together to conserve and replenish depleted marine turtle populations for which they share responsibility. A seven-member Advisory Committee has been appointed by the Signatory States to provide advice in relation to the implementation of the IOSEA MoU's associated Conservation and Management Plan.

During the Third Meeting of the Signatory States in March 2005, concern was raised about the impacts of the December 2004 tsunami on turtle populations and habitats, including leatherback turtles in the Indian Ocean. This species attracted particular attention in light of its restricted numbers and nesting areas, which are present in two of the most affected countries: India (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) and Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the Meeting requested that the Advisory Committee provide an assessment of the conservation status of leatherback turtles within the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia region.

To undertake the assessment, marine turtle experts in each of the countries in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia region (including non-Signatory States to the MoU) were contacted and asked to complete a short survey regarding leatherback turtles in their country. The survey covered legislative aspects, nesting populations and foraging populations. Completed surveys were then edited for content by the compilers, and in some cases additional information was added. The final edited surveys on leatherback turtles are presented in this report.

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