

Status of the leatherback turtle in Singapore

By C. H. Diong

1. The legal protection status for leatherback turtles

1.1 Overview

No specific laws have been enacted to protect marine turtles or marine life as an entire ecosystem. Laws to protect Singapore's wildlife were enacted in 1884. Today, all wildlife is protected by the Wild Animals and Birds Act, enforced in 1965. The Fisheries Act regulates the fishing industry, requiring persons who use fishing gear to obtain a license; the trapping of fish by explosives or poisons and the use of trawl nets are prohibited. Singapore became a signatory of CITES in 1986 and passed the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act to implement the Convention. The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) Singapore is the Management Authority responsible for the implementation and enforcement of CITES in Singapore. All CITES violations pertaining to marine turtles or their products are managed by AVA Singapore. AVA have, in the past, intercepted several illegal consignments of green turtle and hawksbill turtle eggs (but not leatherback turtle eggs) by smugglers.

1.2 Management agencies responsible for marine turtle conservation

Operational level	Name and type of agency
National level	National Parks Board Singapore
State level	-
Local level	-

2. Nesting populations

2.1 Overview

There are no marine turtle nesting beaches in Singapore. No surveys for nesting marine turtles have been conducted in the past. Singapore however has its only leatherback turtle specimen, caught in 1883 in Singapore territorial waters, kept at the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore (Hanitsch 1908). No leatherback turtle has been sighted since.

3. Foraging populations

3.1) Details on any leatherback turtle census or tagging results such as tag recovery data

No studies on foraging leatherback turtles have been conducted in Singapore's waters. There is only one record of a leatherback turtle being sighted or caught in Singapore (Hanitsch 1908); on page 37, Hanitsch wrote: "The specimen in the Museum measures 5feet 9inches in its entire length. It was caught at Siglap, Singapore, in 1883 and presented by the Honourable A.M. Skinner".

3.2) Seasonality of leatherback turtles in coastal and offshore waters

No data available

3.3) Approximate size range of leatherback turtles

The leatherback turtle reported by Hanitsch in 1908 measured "5 feet 9 inches in its entire length"

3.4) Information on the diet of leatherback turtles

No data available

3.5) Other biological studies conducted on leatherback turtles in foraging areas

No biological studies have been conducted on leatherback turtles in Singapore

3.6) Threats to foraging populations of leatherback turtles

No threats have been identified or quantified

3.7) Fisheries bycatch of leatherback turtles and the fisheries involved

No fisheries bycatch of leatherback turtles by Singaporean fleets has been reported

3.8) Other activities being undertaken to improve the conservation of leatherback turtle foraging populations

No other activities have been planned to improve the conservation of leatherback turtles

4. References

Hanitsch R (1908) Guide to the Zoological Collections of the Raffles Museum, Singapore. In 'The Straits Times Press, Limited.' pp. iv -111. (Singapore).