

> TERENGGANU

Troubled by three dead turtles

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■ **By Sean Augustin**
sean@nst.com.my

KUALA TERENGGANU: Conservationists are troubled over the discovery of three dead turtles on the state's beaches within three weeks.

UMT Turtle and Rehabilitation group leader Professor Chan Eng Heng, who just a week ago pleaded for more work to be done to save the Green and Hawksbill turtles, said: "Three may seem like a small number.

"But for the deaths to occur

in such a short time span is worrying.

"About 20 turtle deaths were recorded in 2006 and last year, though there could be more that went unreported."

The first discovery of an adult Green turtle was made on Jan 6 on the Tok Jembal beach, while the second was that of an adult Giant soft shell turtle in Merang on Jan 16.

On Wednesday, an adult male Green turtle was found washed ashore on the Mengebang Telipot beach, just out-

side the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu campus.

While the causes of death of the turtles are unknown, Chan believes they may have been making their way to the Terengganu coast to nest, and she suspects they may have been caught in trawling nets.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, she called for the turtle excluder device (TED) to be made mandatory for trawlers.

The TED is a grid of bars with an opening, usually fitted into the neck of the trawl net.

Small animals pass through

the bars and are caught in the bag end of the trawl, while larger animals, such as turtles and sharks, are ejected through an opening when they strike the grid bars.

"Currently, the TED is used voluntarily, although it was found to be effective when it was tested in Perak more than a decade ago.

"Authorities should implement the use of the TED, especially during the monsoon season when restricted trawling zones are opened up," she said.



Professor Chan Eng Heng (left) measuring the carcass that was discovered near UMT on Wednesday. — Picture courtesy of UMT