



13.0 ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS IN IMPROVING SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION IN MALAYSIA

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During the two days seminar and workshop on sea turtles conservation in Malaysia, details discussion were conducted to identify the issues and key recommendations in improving the sea turtles conservation and management in Malaysia.

Issues in Sea Turtle Conservation in Malaysia

- The consumption and trade of eggs.
- No uniformity in the legislations
- Illegal and unregulated poaching of sea turtles by foreign fishermen (China and Vietnam)
- Research in sea turtles should be expanded to study all life cycle
- The National Plan of Action (NPOA) in sea turtles conservation and management in Malaysia (2008-2013) was not comprehensive and does not involved some of the important agencies from Sabah and Sarawak.
- The Malaysian Marine Turtle Working Group (MTWG) which was mentioned in the NPOA (2008-2013) to run many of the important task in sea turtle conservation in Malaysia was never activated
- In the NPOA (2008-2013), the first priority was to make the National ban on commercial sale of turtle eggs. However, until the NPOA expired this objective was never achieved
- Sea turtle nesting & tagging data and other data such as turtle stranding had been collected especially from the major nesting beaches in Malaysia for more than two decades. However, there is still no database to record this systematically. Even within Malaysia, sea turtle data sharing is impossible. Currently, only Universiti Malaysia Terengganu has their own database to record all nesting and tagging data.
- Lack of training especially for new rangers/workers
- Lack of collaboration among government agencies, university, NGOs and corporate agencies

- Limited funding to conduct sea turtle conservation and outreach programs.

Key Recommendations

At the end of the Seminar and Workshop in Sea Turtle Conservation, five crucial recommendations were pointed out:

- To review and update the National Plan of Action (NPOA) on sea turtles conservation and management in Malaysia for the years 2016 – 2020.
Update: The Department of Fisheries Malaysia had organised four workshops to review the NPOA. The NPOA (2016-2020) had been updated on 30-31 April 2016
- To reactivate the Malaysian Sea Turtle Working Group (MSTWG) with multi-stakeholder membership and its Terms and Reference spelt out.
Update: The Department of Fisheries Malaysia had activated the MSTWG with a specific TOR. This MSTWG with other working groups of marine endangered species in Malaysia will be under the JT SMAT (Jawatankuasa Induk Pengurusan dan Pemuliharaan Spesies Marin Terancam dan Dilindungi). Task completed in April 2016.
- To have a nation-wide ban on the selling of sea turtle eggs, as well as sea turtles and derivatives by December 2016.
Update: The Department of Fisheries Malaysia had prepared a paperwork for the legal framework for sea turtles but only for sea turtles at the Federal area. Once it is approved, the paperwork can be used as a template for other states. Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and WWF-Malaysia is also currently working in preparing a paperwork for the legal frameworks for sea turtles in Terengganu.
- To take immediate actions for Malaysia to accede to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
Update: The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia (NRE) are looking into this matter. Meetings with all stakeholder will be conducted to discuss about this matter. NRE will present the results by April 2016.
- To immediately establish a dedicated multi-stakeholder task force to re-examine the legal framework on turtles, and propose amending the current legislations or create a new legislation to strengthen the governance of sea turtles conservation in Malaysia.
Update: The Sea Turtle Task Force on the legal framework was established on 16 October 2015 by Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid. The Vice Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Dato' Dr. Nor Aeni binti Mokhtar was chosen to head this Task Force. Preparation of paperwork on the legal framework of sea turtles are in progress.

