

# SESSION DESCRIPTION

## ■ SPECIAL SESSION: BEYOND PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLE

Decades of dedicated efforts by past conservationists to protect sea turtles have allowed us to witness the dramatic recovery of some species and regional populations in recent years. At the same time, new issues and discussions are emerging as a result of the recovery. Protecting sea turtles and their environment are often so rewarding that we tend to get lost in the activity itself and fail to see the big picture. As a community that works on sea turtle research and conservation, what should we expect as we move beyond the protection of sea turtles? What are the implications of recovered populations on our conservation efforts? How should we interact with sea turtles and nature once they are recovered? This special session aims to broaden the discussion on the main theme of this symposium “Beyond Protection of Sea Turtles”. The session will consist of 5-minute “speed-talk” type opening presentations from panelists, followed by a facilitated discussion.

### About the Panelists

**Yoshimasa Matsuzawa** is the President of the Sea Turtle Association of Japan. He has spent most summers on nesting beaches for the last 27 years, ever since setting foot into the sea turtle world at the dawn of the bio-logging research era. His expertise is in sea turtle egg physiology and nesting ecology. While in Florida for his post-doc, he inevitably became more aware of Japanese and Asian cultures and values. After returning to Japan and working with partners from around the country, he began considering the importance of conserving the diversity and sustainability of local cultures alongside biodiversity. Although he would like to enjoy the comfort and excitement of working in the field forever, he has been seeking an opportunity to have honest discussions about what it means to go “beyond protection” ever since he realized that the convenient label of “endangered species” will not be around forever.

**Kartik Shanker** is a faculty at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore where he works on the ecology and evolution of both terrestrial and marine fauna. Kartik has worked on the biology and conservation of sea turtles for the last 25 years, including olive ridleys in Odisha and leatherback turtles in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He is the author of *From Soup to Superstar*, a historical account of sea turtle conservation in India. He is a founder trustee of Dakshin Foundation, which works on coastal and marine conservation. In his spare time, he seeks to distract young minds from more serious pursuits with books such as *Lori’s Magical Mystery*, *Turtle Story* and *The Adventures of Philautus Frog*.

**Maria Ângela (Neca) Marcovaldi** is an oceanographer and first commenced her activities with sea turtles in the 80s after a two-year survey along the entire Brazilian coast of roughly 8000 km with only a team of three people. That was the first act of what would become the Brazilian Sea Turtle Conservation Program: Projeto TAMAR. She currently serves as the National Coordinator of Research and Conservation of Fundação Pró-TAMAR. Neca is also a Scientific and Consultative Committee member of the Interamerican Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (since 2004); member of the IUCN/SSC MTSG (since 1989); MTSG Vice Co-Chair of the South West Atlantic region; country coordinator for Widecast (Wider Caribbean Conservation Network); and Leader Representative of Brazil for the Marine Resources Network (AVINA Foundation) since 2002. She also served as the MTSG chair from 1996 to 1998.

**Hiroyuki Suganuma** is the Executive Director of Everlasting Nature of Asia (ELNA). He has been involved in green turtle conservation in the Ogasawara Islands since 1977, and began conducting hawksbill turtle surveys in Cuba and East Asia countries in 1988. He subsequently contributed to the import ban of Bekko material to Japan as a member of the IUCN SSC MTSG, and began conducting hawksbill turtle recovery activities in Indonesia in 1995. Hiroyuki established ELNA for continuing these conservation activities and began leather-back conservation in Indonesia in 1999. ELNA's philosophy is to recover sea turtle populations without interfering with their life cycles and removing the main source of anthropogenic threats. The Indonesian hawksbill turtle and the Ogasawara green turtle populations where ELNA works have dramatically increased. ELNA also conducts necropsies on approximately 100 stranded turtles annually in Japan.

*Excerpt from: Yoshimasa Matsuzawa, 2009. Sea Turtle Conservation and Sea Turtle Association of Japan. In Tatsuo Adachi and Nobuyuki Tokoro (eds). Sustainability and Business Administration: Realizing Coexistence Societies through Environmental Business. Minerva Press, Kyoto, Japan. (Translated by Asuka Ishizaki)*

“What kind of world would open up when we solve the issues that pose threats to sea turtles today, sufficiently recover the population, and remove them from the Red List? We envision a world in which a diversity of relationships exists, as it must have been so for a long time, between sea turtles and people who live outside of urban centers: those who eat sea turtles; those who do not eat sea turtles because of their loyalty to an ancestor who was saved by a sea turtle; those who eat sea turtle eggs; craftsmen who create eyeglass frames using hawksbill shells; fishermen who offer sake<sup>1</sup> to a sea turtle caught in his net; fishermen who carry out a burial for a dead sea turtle in expression of sympathy; fishermen who enshrine in their family altar<sup>2</sup> a piece of driftwood that a sea turtle used as a pillow; children who play at the beach mocking the tracks of sea turtles that came to nest; children who surround a sea turtle and torment it, and a young fisherman who comes by to rescue the turtle<sup>3</sup>. To bring back rich and plentiful nature that allows and tolerates such a diversity of values and world views, we believe, is the natural direction toward which we should be moving.” (p.207)

1 Sake is traditionally used as one of the highest forms of offerings in Shinto practices.

2 Most Japanese households have a family altar called kamidana, following the traditional Shinto practice. A talisman called Shinsatsu or Ofuda issued by a Shinto shrine is typically placed on the kamidana as a protector of the household. Offerings such as rice and sake are placed regularly on the kamidana.

3 In reference to the Japanese folklore Urashima Taro, which is a story about a young fisherman who rescues a sea turtle being tormented by a group of children, and is rewarded for his heroic act with a visit to an underwater palace.



**Jack Frazier's** life began in Hawaii; born in Rochester, New York; chased snakes before he could walk; raised to observe, consider and question; has observed, caught, kept, bred, pondered and consumed diverse animals and plants since youth; student of Niko Tinbergen; a stickler for clear, consistent communications, respect & ethics; a trans- inter- multi-disciplinary addict; navigates poorly in the mainstream, most comfortable at the edges of dogma; toils with rights for "Nature" and common-pool property; travels widely, yet much to experience, appreciate and learn; convinced that "Nature" and "Art" are all-inclusive; a strict omnivore; a spiritual gypsy with peripatetic musical tastes; an unapologetic evangelical iconoclast.

**Paolo Casale** is Senior Researcher at the University of Pisa, Italy. His studies focus on marine turtles as a case taxon for implementing/developing a variety of research methods, with ecology, behaviour, dispersal, demography, population dynamics, and conservation biology being among the main fields of interest. He is committed in promoting networking aimed to conservation and research, and has served in the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN/SSC) from 2006 as a Regional Vice Chair and from 2015 as Co-Chair.

**Matthew Godfrey** has worked with sea turtles in various countries and continents since 1989. He currently serves as the Sea Turtle Biologist for North Carolina, USA. His research interests range from physiology, behavior and ecology to conservation and its issues related to social justice.

**Colin Limpus**, Chief Scientist with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science, is celebrating 50 years of leading marine turtle research and conservation projects in Queensland. His studies range widely across nesting and foraging populations, exploring reproductive ecology, embryology, population genetics, migration, diet and population dynamics. He was instrumental in establishing sustainable ecotourism around loggerhead turtle nesting at Mon Repos in Queensland to provide economic benefit to the local region. Colin has provided training in marine turtle conservation in many countries in the Indian Ocean-western Pacific region. He is a scientific Councillor (marine turtles) to the UNEP Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) and an advisor to the CMS Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding. Colin visited Japan many times for meetings with the Japan Bekko Association regarding sustainable use of hawksbill turtles.

