

Introduction to the 2020 Report on Sea Turtles of Oceania prepared by the Oceania Region of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group

The Oceania Region of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group ([https://www.iucn-
mtsg.org/](https://www.iucn-mtsg.org/)) consists of 24 countries/territories culturally and linguistically known as Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. The Region extends from Pitcairn Islands in the East, to Palau in the West, and from the Hawaiian Islands in the North, to New Zealand in the South. This vast area encompasses 100 million square kilometers of Pacific Ocean containing over 1200 islands, many of which are extremely remote and without human habitation. Excepting the large land-mass countries of Polynesian New Zealand and Melanesian Papua New Guinea, the total human population of the 22 smaller countries/territories is relatively low at 3.7 million people, or only <0.5% of the world population. For the purposes of this report, the Oceania Region was organized by the Regional Vice Chairs to contain 25 chapters comprising 15 Sea Turtle Regional Management Units (RMU's as defined by Wallace et al. 2010). The 25 chapters in alphabetical order comprise American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Palmyra, Pitcairn Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Jarvis/Baker/Howland, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The MTSG Oceania country/territory of Wallis and Futuna is not included in this report due to the absence of any information on sea turtles. In addition, the Polynesian outlier of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) has not been included since administratively it falls within the East Pacific Region of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group. The decision was made by the Regional Vice Chairs, in consultation with the chapter authors, to treat Palmyra (isolated outlier territory of the USA) and Jarvis/Baker/Howland (isolated outlier territories of the USA) as chapters of their own.

The Regional Vice Chairs of the MTSG Oceania Region express their sincere thanks and appreciation to all authors of these 25 chapters for their hard work, perseverance, patience, and accomplishments. The task has been long and at times difficult, but ultimately of high reward. We dedicate this report to our dearly departed MTSG members Lui Bell (1956-2012), George Petro (2013), and Sue Tai (1962-2020). We are also grateful to the people of Oceania in support of their deep cultural and traditional ties to sea turtles in ways that are not always easily understood by others.

The full 675 page report is available at [https://www.iucn-
mtsg.org/regional-reports](https://www.iucn-mtsg.org/regional-reports). A list of the chapter authors can be found at [2020- Chapter Authors of the IUCN/MTSG Sea Turtles of Oceania Regional Report 2020 Edited by Thierry Work, Denise Parker and George Balazs.](#)

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