

Marine Turtles of Papua New Guinea

Unedited Field Notes

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Account of field work conducted on behalf of Papua New Guinea  
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

August - Sept. - Oct. 1978

Manus Island. 24 August 1978.

Travelled by speedboat from Lorengau to Tulu Village (1½ hours). Had spoken previous day with Gabriel Sosol (known as Lyson) - magistrate on Ponam Island. Following data from Gabriel:

Vernacular names on Ponam:

Hawksbill : keheng

Green : pawah

Leatherback : pwiriu

Greens and hawksbills nest at any time on Ponam - no definite season. All sizes are found around the island. The turtle can be caught by anyone, and several different methods are used, viz: diving at night by moonlight (shallow water); or diving by day (spears used in both cases). Also, when feasts or special celebrations are to be held, the leader of the clan may give permission for several nets to be used. These are 30-40 yards long, with 8-9" holes, and are made locally; they are held across passages between reefs, and one net may catch 10-15 turtles in one day. The green is the more common species, and hawksbills are found in somewhat different places. The shell used to be utilized, now may be sold to visitors, or thrown away. Turtles are still used for bride purchase, and are not thought to be declining. They are worth 20-50 K each, depending on size. They are killed before use, by banging in the head or cutting the throat, and the entire turtle heated over the fire. The guts are removed after heating (not true cooking).

Turtles may be kept in corrals until used for feasts. The eggs are eaten but not sold. He mentioned a formula for calculating the number of days before a turtle came to nest again by counting the number of eggs. People from Pityilu Island bring turtles alive to the market at Lorengau; one was sold on August 23.

Tulu Village. 24 August 1978.

Chief informant: Pahu, student at technical college on Rabaul.  
Well informed and seemingly reliable. Source of following information:

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kareen

Green : pawa

Leatherback : poleleu

Pacific ridley picture also recognized - but also called pawa. Not seen nesting. Leatherback nests in June and July at Tulu. About nine nestings in an average year; 14 or 15 in a good year; only 3 or 4 this year. Nesting beach extends west for a mile or two from Tulu II. 150 or 160 eggs laid, plus 16 or 17 undersized. Eggs are collected and eaten - also the turtles if found. However, at least one nest this year was undisturbed. Once saw hatchlings running to the sea. When found, the adult may be lured to the cooking site by means of a lamp held near its face. One elderly informant said that the turtles were increasing from the old days. The undersized eggs are grouped into large and small; the number of large gives the number of days before re-nesting; and the number of small the time of night. But - the next turtle is a different individual.

Hawksbills nest any month, but mostly on the small offshore island (Sakemecha Island); seemingly not diminished. Shell not used any more, though formerly was used to make combs and jewelry. We were given a shell by Wamei Kapoen which he had cleaned to show people - half-grown hawksbill, well prepared and smoked, not rotten. Hawksbills lay about 120 eggs and 10 or 11 undersized. Turtles are eaten by local crocodiles, also by sharks. Five men are needed to carry a large green turtle, 3 or 4 to carry a hawksbill. Thinks hawksbills are bigger on the mainland than on the islands. People eat hawksbill, and it makes them happy and strong, never sick.

Local magician or seer can divine when a leatherback will come and nest by cooking up a mixture of coconut oil and dogsteeth, and sago.

Pacific ridleys speared occasionally. Sometimes contain immature eggs, but nesting has not been seen. Sex ratio about even, but males

have short tails (!) and females long ones. Taste equally good, though a post-nesting female not so good. Kill small turtles by mashing the head against the ground to break the neck; big ones by banging on head.

A certain family at Tulu has rights to leatherbacks that nest there; they will stop coming if traditional ownership is not followed. Animal divided and certain parts go to each family; whole animal eaten (meat, fat, shell). One leatherback killed this year; about 4 nested, eggs taken from 3 nests. About 15 gallons of their dark-brown fishy oil-smelling obtained from a leatherback; used for lamps - burns without smoking. Turtle cut up and cooked in water and seawater, meat cooked and oil collected off surface of water. A sample was brought for us to see.

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Specimens collected at Tulu: well-preserved shell of juvenile hawksbill; a dozen or so scutes of a larger (adult) individual.

Placing oil, dogsteeth on a plate - eating? sago - and chant (incant) a spiel over the plate.

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According to Ken Millington (owner of Seeadler Lodge), Purdy Islands (Rat, Mouse, Mole, and the seasonally joined North and South Bat) are very important turtle islands. They are uninhabited. Mouse or Round Island is the best for turtles - you can get 1 or 2 there almost any night. Leased by Ken for 99 years; gives permission for people from M'Buke Islands to collect copra, seagull eggs, and turtles from time to time. Islands are about 39 miles from M'Buke. Both greens and hawksbills, former somewhat more common. Join between Bat Island is a 15 foot high sandbank, 1½ miles long, present from August to December. Seagull eggs collected mainly on Rat Island, November-December.

Ponam Island. 24 August 1978

Main informant: Charles Kayou

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kehang

Green : pawa

Leatherback : pwiriu

First two are caught by harpooning. Green swims around freely; hawksbill often caught "under stones" on the bottom. In old days, Europeans bought shells - K4 - K5 for small, up to K20 for large - but no-one from Lorengau buys them now. Pawa more abundant, and has cleaner shell, without encrustaceans, so favored by many Europeans (!) Anyone can fish for turtles, but must respect ownership rights that extend out to the reef and beyond - i.e. fish in your own area. Both pawa and kehang may be kept in temporary corrals in the sea to hold until big feast. They may be kept alive on land for a week, but for longer periods are kept in corrals, where the greens can feed on the grass in the shallows. Ponam is not good for nesting for either species; but pawa nests in July between the SE and NW winds. Males have long tails, females short.

One live juvenile hawksbill was brought for us to see; beautiful animal - very few dark plastral markings, except for one or two near edge.

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Specimens collected at Ponam: several shell bones plus upper jaw plate of an adult (or near adult) green, found in shallow water.

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25 August 1978.

Departed at 10:10 a.m. for Pak Island (1½ hour trip - calm water). 11 a.m. spotted a 30cm. green turtle near the shore of the airport island. High speed on the surface; we gave chase, and it eventually dived.

At Moukakava Village, near SW end of Pak Island, we spoke with Norman Bill's stepfather Konelus and his uncle Joseph Katou.

Identified all species except flatback as follows:

Leatherback	: kalpuit (large eggs)	
Green	: locquis	
Hawksbill	: kehang (small eggs)	Eggs of similar size
Ridley	: paroul	
Loggerhead	: ahoulam	

Leatherback frequents river mouths; 3 or 4 men needed to lift it up. Hawksbill small with 'strong' back shell. Green turtle large. Loggerhead large and long; ridley smaller and short. (Doubt is raised by assurance that a turtle eaten last week was a loggerhead, which when we examined the carapace and plastron proved to be an adult green.)\*

Nesting (thought to be by all species except leatherback) occurs on Pak Island, though infrequently. Much more nesting on Los Reyes (all 3 islands).

Leatherbacks often float near logs, but very hard to catch in the water because so big and strong.

A lethargic hawksbill is thought to have eaten something toxic, and should not be eaten - it is poisonous, potentially fatally so.

Turtles start nesting for about 6 months when the south-east winds start up (all species). No nesting during the NW wind season.

Lots of greens, hawksbills, and ridleys. Loggerheads scarce, and not nesting locally.

A turtle is thought to lay twice, in the same place. If you count the eggs, the odd number ones indicates the days before one should look for it again - i.e. 96 eggs: 6 days later; 90 eggs: 10 days later. Number of eggs is about the same each time.

Most turtles can be caught during the SE season - used for funeral feasts, and for exchange with mainland villages, for commodities such as sago, taro, vegetables - or money.

We went with Konelus to see a turtle corral on the far end of Pak Island. However, although warmly received when we got there, the ten turtles had just been removed, a few hours before, and transported to mainland of Manus for a bride price ceremony. We were presented with the shell of a young green turtle, then headed for home.

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\* Dimensions of this green turtle: carapace 103 X 79cm (straight); 107 X 95 (curved).

Specimens collected: adult shell (with loose scutes) of green turtle. Dried carapace of a juvenile green turtle. (Both from Pak Island).

26 August 1978.

Checked the Saturday market in Lorengau. Three juvenile green turtles for sale; the largest showed the typical features of the East Pacific subspecies (agassizi) - extensive grey infuscation on plastron, very dark carapace, shell heart-shaped and tapering toward rear - sharp contrast with the other specimens - more oval, lighter above, unpigmented below.

Larger: 58cm. carapace length; 58½cm. width; 47½cm. plastron length; 48cm. plastron width.

2nd : 49½cm. carapace length; 45cm. width; 39cm. plastron length; 41cm. plastron width.

Larger with slight damage to the rear of shell, possibly from boat propellor. Caught by Pitylu Village people off Mocarang. Other caught by Bunai people, same place. Dimensions of third on file on reporting sheets. Prices : 5-8K, depending on size.

Information about Manus turtles from Frydget Hudson: Lou Island, Rei Village:

Hawksbill : wunick (nests on deserted beaches)

Green : pukaring

Leatherback : alimpis

Rambutyo Island: Lungat Poau (informant). Turtles congregate when certain stars disappear - March-April:

Hawksbill : karang

Green : changine

Leatherback : calipeach (big eggs; nests near estuaries - a common observation)

Loggerhead : bowomon

Harvest figures not available. People from Rambutyo, Pak, Tong, and Pitylu can collect eggs on Los Reyes. Leathery only seen on Rambutyo once or twice a year. Others - populations somewhat reduced. Turtles caught under rocks where they rest, or while copulating in shallow waters.

Pak Island: turtle populations reduced. Access to Los Reyes used to be restricted by weather, but now can be reduced at any time of the year. Also people live on the islands to work the plantations, and take eggs while there. Hunting is a major cause of decline. All species except leatherback nest on Los Reyes.

27 August 1978.

Arrived at village on Harengan Island after much adversity. Chief informants were Komet Pwalo and Karau.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : eheh (nests on Harengan)

Green : bawa (nests on Harengan)

Leatherback : withu (nests on adjacent mainland)

Another turtle, called Moah or "Moi" is found rarely. Dark phase not known. Moah may be the loggerhead.

Green and hawksbill nest all year round, with the new moon. About 90-100 eggs first time, 120-130 second time (same turtle). Eggs are counted if turtle not seen, and days for next nesting calculated from the odd number of eggs above an exact number of tens. People not known to get ill from eating turtles. Hawksbill shell may be kept for selling to visitors.

Moah reported to nest on all islands around, throughout the year. But? mistaken. When transport is available, turtles are taken to Lorengau for sale, but usually eaten locally at feasts. Traditional net used is made of tree bark - but present people do not know how to repair it! Only spears are used now, and since nets were discontinued, turtle populations are reported to be increasing. Baby turtles are sometimes seen on the beaches; sometimes kept as pets for a while.



Adults are kept in pens in the sea until needed for feasts; fed on sea grasses. Hawksbills eat small clams on the rocks - not vegetation. Turtles are killed by banging on the head with a heavy stick.

Nesting very little on Harengan Island because of too many people, but lay on neighboring uninhabited island 'about ten times a year.' Paluwak Island is good for nesting.

Lessau Mission Station. 28 August 1978

(near NW corner of Manus)

Two informants: Bennett and Mihill (both evangelicals).

Leatherbacks nest on beach near Lessau about twice a year - December to February, during stormy weather with lightning etc. Eggs collected following morning but the turtles are not killed. Informant had seen adults about 4 times - he drew a picture in the sand of the seven keels. Eggs large, but elongate or smaller ones also found.

Saw two greens in a corral around the point, both immature, 'light phase' (although one darker than the other). Being kept for a celebration. Many crocodiles reported in neighboring mangrove estuary, that sometimes eat turtles (and dogs!).

Bipi Island. 28 August 1978 p.m.

Talked with English-speaking schoolteacher, John Losilem.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kahek

Green : pawa

Leatherback : pwiteu

Latter nests in September on black sand beach near Liap (?) - one or two. They can also be seen drifting on the south coast. They lay different sizes of eggs. Greens and hawksbills are known to lay on Bipi, the majority being greens; but much better nesting on the uninhabited Sabben Islands, beyond Bipi. In this group, up to six per night (altogether) may nest throughout the year. Both good to eat, but leatherback has bad meat. Populations not thought to be declining - not all eggs are eaten, and hatchlings are sometimes seen. Not known to make people sick who eat them. Turtles kept in fences until needed

for feast, but will eat at other times too. Formerly hawksbill used for making belts, rings etc. - now often kept and sold to visitors. We were shown plates of at least two hawksbills; the 5th vertebral from an adult would fetch about 50 toea.

'Moah' described as having big head, orange underside, as big as the green turtle - presumably loggerhead. Only big ones seen, not plentiful.

Formula used to calculate when turtle will re-nest: 1 stick put in ground for each ten eggs, starting two days after the nesting, and removed daily until only 4 sticks left. Then go out at night to find the turtle.

Hawksbill eggs smaller than green turtle eggs. Eggs boiled but don't go hard. Turtles sometimes sold or exchanged for sago.

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N.B. The ridley photographed on Bipi Island by Julius Bill in 1977 was not caught in the water there, but was found in a canoe that had drifted up from an unknown source. Thus, there is still no evidence of either loggerheads or ridleys from Papua New Guinea; and the only flatback nesting record for the north side is almost certainly in error (but may be ridleys).

Brother Louisson, formerly of Manus, now at Aitape, reported that he counted 70 turtles eaten on Bipi to celebrate the ordination of a priest.

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29 August 1978.

Arnold Marsipal - building contractor in Lorengau, familiar with Los Reyes Islands, which his brother visits seasonally to plant coconuts. One parent from Tong and one from Nauna. Tong people are 7th Day Adventists - do not eat turtles.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kareng

Green : karat(100-130 eggs)

Leatherback : kalipitch (seen near Madang, north coast of New Guinea, laying eggs at Sarang.

Los Reyes: turtles plentiful 1950's to 1960's - 15 or 20 could be taken in one month in April/May. Now only about 3 per month at same time, fewer in other months.

In 1975, five dogs were left on two of the islands, and they have dug up the turtle's nests. Sea birds also annihilated. Have asked twice to have them shot, but nothing done. Arnold's brother would shoot them if he had a gun.

Hawksbill shell not used nowadays, but younger people like to varnish the whole carapace and sell it for 5-10K depending on the size.

People from Rambutyo and Pak also visit Los Reyes to collect turtles and eggs for food. Los Reyes Islands owned by Tong people; visitors sometimes request permission, sometimes do not. Arnold would support ban on exploiting the turtles as well as shooting the dogs.

Talked with Kombil Leomue, Councillor from Lou Island (Rei Village, one of four villages on the island). He said that 2 leatherbacks had nested on Lou Island during the last two years - one killed in 1977, one not killed in 1978. Former taken to Lorengau.

#### Lou Island.

Talked with Councillor - Kombil Leomue from Rei Village (one of four villages on the island).

Leatherback nested on Lou, November 1977, at Boan Village. Was killed after nesting, brought into Lorengau. Another nesting in 1978 was not killed.

Kombil saw a leatherback lay 100 eggs in 1932 near Tukeo Kapatam, New Ireland, near Lombon (opposite Rabaul). In 1938 he saw another in the same place.

Lou Islanders eat turtle eggs; also, people from Mouk, Rambutyo, Pak, and Baluan Villages pay Lou Islanders for privilege of catching turtles and eggs. Not all eggs laid on Lou are eaten; they may be sold, or visitors may be given permission to gather them. Best nesting months are July/August; very few nest at other times of the year. 2 or 3 nests each week at the beach near Rei Village - hawksbills commonest, then greens; leatherbacks very occasional.

Outside Lorengau, the main market for turtles in Manus is Loi, a large village on the south coast.

In former times turtles were scarce on Lou; now they are plentiful because the Mouk people moved from Baluan to Rambutyo to run the Lengandrawa copra plantation, so less visits by Mouk people. This took place in the late 1960's or early 1970's.

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1978 Lou leatherback nested at Baon Village, Lou Island. Eggs collected and sold. (2 turtle eggs for 10 toea; or 1 chicken for 10 toea).

Jimmy Paliou - A/Admin. Officer, Manus Provincial Government from Baluan Village.

Turtles do not rest on Baluan or Pau because of rocks. Formerly many were caught over the reefs there but now they are rare. Nesting occurs at Polat and people will count the eggs to determine when the turtle will return to nest again. Turtles are still caught for feast purposes on the reefs between Rambutyo and Baluan, and fishermen who find turtles casually will catch them for food.

In 1975 (when Prov. Gov. building was opened) a leatherback turtle was found nesting near Lili (near Lugos Mission), on black sand. (Sand is also black on Lou Island).

Some nesting on M'buke Island and their neighbors, and on Rat (or Alim) Island - traditionally owned by Baluan people - other Purdy Islands belong to M'buke people, who collect turtles for feasts (possibly once a month on average).

Young Seventh Day Adventists on Lou will eat Cuscus and turtle against their religion.

Johnson Island has been uninhabited since late 1950's/early 60's and could be a good breeding area. M'buke people go there to fish on the reefs. Traditional ownership rights by people of Timonoea Village (south coast of Manus), who are interrelated with people of M'buke.

South coast villagers trade their sago for fish, turtles and coconut oil with islanders from Rambutyo and Baluan.

Jimmy has seen half a dozen green turtles mating outside Seadler

Harbour - January-June 1978; does not know where they nest. Fewer turtles caught nowadays because no longer an economic proposition.

Peter Silon, from Amik Island (Ninigo Group, Western Islands); teacher at Pombut Primary School.

Leathery called hawalam - occasionally seen drifting around the Western islands, though only the big ones are seen near land.

Green: hon waman (i.e. true turtle) and hawksbill: masang. Both common - both nest on all the islands. Only 5 out of more than 100 islands are inhabited, and these are largely avoided by the turtles.

People on Amik Island catch turtles by diving or with harpoons; mostly greens, some hawksbills (latter not known to cause sickness). In former times shell was sold to Japanese or Europeans, but now usually thrown away. Turtles and eggs eaten on the Catholic Islands (Amik, Lou, Pateleu). SDA's on Pehan, Leot, Alovan, and Wuvulu do not eat them.

No restrictions on catching turtles in Western Islands - anyone can catch them anywhere, on the beach or in the sea. During the day, they can be seen in the sea from the beach.

Government trawler crews catch turtles on Pisin Island (near Hermit) in large numbers, and take them back to Manus for sale - may be as many as 30 or 40 big ones brought in on one trip. This happened about 4 times in 1977; the turtles were sold direct to the consumers and did not appear in the market.

The turtles do not bask on shore by daytime. Nesting can be predicted by the stars and moon, and returns calculated by a system with sticks stuck into the ground.

(There is an airstrip on Mal Island, at the Gov't. Patrol Post, 50 miles from Pisin Island. Boat transportation to Western Isles available from Wewak, on stores boat).

Turtles eaten mainly at feasts - Christmas, Easter etc. They are kept in pens in the sea, and one pen may have up to 30 or 35 turtles.

Greens eat seaweed. Hawksbills eat limestone (coral?) and seaweeds. Has seen hatchlings both on beach and in the water.

Manus High School. Teacher reported seeing a dead leatherback brought into Lorengau. This had been caught while drifting in the sea with a harpoon - caught by a Peire man.

Johnson Island. 3 main islands. Only one family there now. Both greens and hawksbills nest. West side of Johnson Island without reef.

We saw 5 turtles from Rambutyo at the school that were going to be eaten for school lunch the next day. 1 hawksbill (carapace 35cm.), 2 greens of same size, two much larger greens (carapace 60cm.). This was about the 4th time in 1978 that turtles were on the school menu - too expensive to eat regularly. We explained dangers of eating hawksbill - poisonous, endangered etc.

#### MADANG DISTRICT

30 August 1978.

Acting fisheries officer, Martin Jorai: Very few turtles brought into the Madang market. One leatherback caught in a net in November 1977 by fisheries people off Enora Village, and was given to the villagers to eat. Generally found to the west, west of Wewak, particularly near Boiken. Thinks he remembers from his childhood that nesting took place October and November.

Enima Village, Astralabe Bay. Saw two old nests, probably leathery. Met up with a villager. Described how leatherback eggs were caught by lining the nest with a shirt just before laying started, and removing it just before covering up. When asked how many men were needed to lift a leatherback, he said it could not be done. Four or five men needed to heave it over on its back. Killed by clubbing on head. Meat was oily and smelly and when eaten you have the odor for some time. The turtles nest "when the yams are planted" - similar observation received from someone else. Meat sold in Madang market, seemingly very inexpensively - a bolt of meat perhaps ½lb. fetched only 10 toea.

Inspected a barbeque site, where a nesting turtle had been baked. Found a few scutes lying around - appeared to be Chelonia plastral scutes. Confirmed that leatherbacks lay small eggs as well as big ones. No techniques for counting eggs to estimate when it will come back - enough turtles to make this unnecessary. Thought they nested all around the

bay - "one here, one there, one further down" on a given night. Others nested sporadically year round (i.e. green and hawksbills).

31 August 1978.

Aerial survey from Madang to just past Awar (see aerial log).  
Went to Boroï Village near Awar. Chief informant: "Jimmy".

Vernacular names:

Green : vaccourtnam

Leatherback: messis

Hawksbill : gandolige

Mardu= general name for turtles.

Leathery season, north of Awar: about one month in September/October. During season, can see three or four per night. 100 or more eggs altogether; the small ones are no good to eat. Kill the leatherback, but do not carry it away - too big. Takes about ten men to turn one over. Greens and hawksbills nest at any time. Usually nest on open beach (to north), not in Hansa Bray (where we saw lots of swimming turtles from the air). One or two hawksbill nest each week, all year round; all 60 eggs (approx.) are good to eat. Collect them when looking for leatherbacks. All eggs are collected - they have to dig in the sand for them if the mother turtle has already gone. Have not noticed hatchlings advancing to the sea, but have seen young turtles washed up in trash. Turtle meat sold in the Bogia market. 100K for one leatherback, 50t for one piece of meat. Meat is smoked and sold dry. Oil from the fat used for cooking only, not burning for light.

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Visited Karkar Island. Talked with Charles and Margaret Kitchener at Kaviak Plantation. They had two hawksbill shells, each about 35 cm. long.

Went to Mapo Village on Karkar. Chief informant: Bisa Udil.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : sarol

Vernacular names: (continued)

Leatherback : limilam

Green : banaun

Leatherbacks seen out to sea, and nest occasionally at Gavira beach, for about 4 months beginning in September. Leatherbacks not eaten but both green and hawksbill are - not known to cause sickness. Latter two nest from September to December during the NW winds - rough seas.

Eggs are located by poking with a stick - all eggs found are eaten, and the turtle as well if found - put on the fire before she lays her eggs.

Comparable numbers of both greens and hawksbills; no apparent decrease. Very rarely see hatchlings. Eggs and turtles not seen in market. Turtles caught in net; also by harpoons on special occasions, though only a few men are good at harpooning turtles. Put a long net around a turtle feeding area to catch them. Not many small turtles seen; turtles not used in trade. Saw a hawksbill shell in the village (again about 35cm.).

That evening, Sue talked with Henry Bode (Steamship Company, Madang). Reported seeing a green nesting on Coutrance Island (Central Province) - date uncertain. Turtle eggs sold in market at Kupiano and Madang. Also reported catching a Pelochelys bibroni in a trawl net off Madang, 6-40 feet deep (caught 3 times, released each time). Bit off a proffered  $\frac{1}{2}$ " stick.

Dr. Bernard Tursch (Belgian marine biologist - Brussels University) - based at Laing Island Marine Lab. in Hansa Bay. Confirmed that turtles are mostly found in NW part of Hansa Bay. Green nest on Laing Island from February to April - hawksbill found on surface from early September onwards. Plenty of turtle grass in Hansa Bay, which is why the turtles like it.

Saidor. 1 September 1978

Flew from Madang to Saidor via Long & Crown Islands. (see aerial survey report). Found fresh green turtle eggs on surface of beach; manager of Saidor Plantation believed that they were removed from a slaughtered turtle caught on Long Island a few days earlier. 196 eggs in a green turtle bought by the Plantation at the same time.



Turtles caught on Long Island are sold in the Saidor market.

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Travelled by trawler from Saidor to Long Island; arrived at Pt. Kiau Village (by lighthouse) at 8 a.m.

Long Island. (Point Kiau)

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : ololo

Green : padado

Leatherback : kabadue

Informant: Aring Yal (27 years old, Chairman Conservation Committee of Long Island).

Good nesting in May, June, July; not during the rough weather of December to February. Green commonest, then leatherback, then hawksbill, between Malala and Bokbok. Pigs apparently do not eat the eggs because unable to dig them out. 20-30 nesting turtles per month are eaten by people on the island. Green turtle tastes best; leathery not eaten, only the eggs, of which it lays about 40. Turtles are caught at sea by swimmers, who implant hooks in their skin by hand and pull them in. Do not keep the shell of the hawksbill; don't use harpoons or nets to catch turtles. Green lays about 50 eggs. Think that each lays only once per season (but how does he know?); no other species of turtle is ever seen.

Formerly foreigners used to come to Long Island to take turtles and eggs; no longer permitted, and apparently law is respected.

2 September 1978.

Second informant: Yal Pelek, father of Aring Yal. Also from Kiau Point Village.

Turtles nest in the vicinity (i.e. Northern Long Island) every month of the year, the majority being greens. Hawksbills are occasional. Leatherbacks nest in small numbers during rough weather - after Christmas - on the beach between Sororo and Point Kiau; total numbers small. Not eaten by local people, although the eggs are. Latter reported to number only 20-40, with some undersized and yolkless. Hawksbill not eaten. Greens caught both in the water and on the beach.

Often caught while mating, from small outrigger canoes and caught by hand. They are seen mating at all times of the year. Only the female is eaten, the male being released because it does not taste so good (less fat). Mating hawksbills are occasionally seen, but not mating leatherbacks.

Turtles are caught at sea by swimmers who approach them cautiously and implant hooks in the skin of their neck; the swimmer then returns to the canoe and pulls the turtle in on a line. The meat is shared among various friends and relatives of the captor. Yal estimated that one might find around ten green turtles that night if we walk from Malala to Point Kiau. He observed that many nests escape discovery when people do not walk along a particular stretch of beach. One turtle was caught last Thursday, caught nesting on the beach near Malala. Turtle eggs are not eaten every day, just when people are inclined to go out and find them. Yal does not feel that the overall numbers of the turtles are diminishing. Turtles are not kept alive in pens or crawls on Long Island.

Hawksbill shell (carved, individual pieces) may be used in bride price. Whole turtles not used in either bride price or other ceremonies.

Yal and Aring had each only seen a nesting leatherback once - one last year (1977) and one two years ago. Greens may be found nesting all night; if they need one, they go out just after dark and find one.

Travelled by trawler to Malala Village (about seven miles to the east) in the late afternoon. Talked with many people (about 65 gathered around us - most of the village); chief informant was Langou Loulam.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : ololo (not eaten)

Green : pardodo (eaten)

Leatherback : karadue (not eaten)

Leatherbacks nest during the rainy season (December, January, February). Greens nest every night around Malala, though best nesting is from June to October. Hawksbills only nest occasionally. Eggs of all species are eaten. Turtles caught at sea by hooking them in the

neck - same technique as described by Yal. Number of eggs depends on the size of the turtle. Leatherback lays big eggs plus small yolkless eggs. Turtles are gathered for special occasions by just checking the beach for the night or two before; they are not kept in corrals in the sea. Outsiders can buy turtles but they do not do so very often. He thinks that the turtles are as plentiful as they have ever been. The meat is usually smoked since there is too much to eat at one time; the guts and the developing eggs are also eaten. After the first laying they mate and return to lay eggs again. As with the other village, they will stalk mating green turtle and release the male while keeping the female. Males have no fat and smell rather bad. Both sexes are plentiful. Nesting density is variable - sometimes only 2 or 3 from Malala to Point Kiau, sometimes 6 or 7 on a given night. Greens are taken occasionally to Saidor Market for money; number in a shipment is very variable. A whole turtle fetches K20-50 depending on size, but sold in small lots of meat. This happened four times in 1978, but none the previous year as no boat was available. Relatively few greens nest during the rainy season - this is the principal time for the leatherbacks.

2 September 1978.

We walked the beach from Malala to Point Kiau, starting at 7:30 and arriving approximately 2 a.m., in company with Aring and Michael. Moderate wind had been blowing all day. Beach was entirely volcanic - very black sand, interspersed with area of smooth boulders or rough aggregated rock. Often high cliffs behind beach, with huge trees perched precariously on top. Very few inhabitants between Malala and Point Kiau, and all were rather close to one or the other of those villages. Walking was difficult at times, either because of very soft sand, or because of jumbled rocks and sea beating at the foot of vertical cliffs. Also at times very large trees had fallen and had to be laboriously climbed over.

Twelve nesting (or pre- or post-nesting) green turtles were seen, as well as tracks of at least seven others from the same night, and

one turtle (13th) turned on its back awaiting slaughter in the morning. Moreover, since they were seen on a single walk that terminated at about 2 a.m., there might have been others that we missed. Total for the night may have been about 35, with (who knows?) perhaps the same number beyond Point Kiau, maybe 70 altogether.

Dimensions of four fresh shells we saw at a beach camp near Malala were as follows:

	Length (straight)	Width (straight)	Length (curved)	Width (curved)
1)	95.5cm.	68.5cm.	99.cm.	94.5cm.
2)	93. cm.	68.5cm.	98.cm.	87.5cm.
3)	97.75cm.	72. cm.	102.5cm.	91.0cm.
4)*	92. cm.	70. cm.	95.5cm.	89.0cm.

\* Number 4 had been caught the previous night.

Nesting turtles had the following dimensions:

	Length (curved)	Width (curved)
1)	105 cm.	100 cm.
2)	96.5 cm.	--
3)	102 cm.	97.5 cm.
4)	100 cm.	98 cm.
5)	107 cm.	96 cm.
6)	94.75cm.	83.5 cm.
7)	112 cm.	104 cm.
8)	100 cm.	92.5 cm.
9)	105.5 cm.	97 cm.
10)	107 cm.	97.5 cm.
11)	105 cm.	--
12)	98 cm.	89.5 cm.

All were of the broad 'Atlantic' type, without tapering at rear of shell or raised central part of the carapace. Color, however, ranged greatly, from nearly uniformly dark to attractively spotted. The 2 or 3 that were turned showed no plastral pigmentation.

Turtles do not nest on Umboi or Tokawina Islands (between Long Island and SW tip of New Britain) because of a lack of beaches.

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Village information from mainland villages near Madang:

1) Wab Village, just west of Saidor. Chief informant: Tuknai Ket. Leatherback: badagul. Nests in vicinity from February to April, sporadically. Informant took eggs of one to market last March, but did not kill the turtle. Up to 150 eggs - about ten undersized Between Nankina River and Sang Creek, 2 or 3 may nest each night. Hawksbill: amom. Plenty on the reef. About 100 eggs at a time - also, February-April. Eaten by some, and not known to cause sickness. Green: luglug. Up to 190 eggs, all same size. Nests during the planting season - January to May. Some eggs eaten, others sold in Saidor Market.

Young hawksbill is called kutkutne - piece of shell confirmed this was the same species - perhaps just the juvenile phase with scutes overlapping.

Green turtle eggs sell at 6 for 10 toea; leathery at 5 for 10 toea. Meat of green turtle also sold. Greens only caught when they come above to nest, but hawksbills caught at sea also "with fishing wire" over the reefs. Overall turtle populations in the area are not thought to be declining. Plenty of hatchlings seen going into sea - "one or two months" after the eggs were laid. Turtles are killed and eaten whenever people feel like it, not for feasts or celebrations. A slaughtered turtle is distributed throughout the village - any excess will be taken to market. Both green and hawksbill may be found nesting the same night - 5 or 6 along the beach, with the latter more common. Another good nesting place is the other side of the Nanking River.

Nearby at Sawaoi Village (the driver's village) we saw two young hawksbill shells identified as "kutkutne", and one adult luglug (green) shell, from a village on the coast opposite Saidor. Latter had been caught while nesting around June.

Dimensions: straight length-96.5 cm; curved length-100.5 cm;  
straight width-75 cm; curved width-94 cm.

Bainab Village. near Matukai Village(near Cape Croiselles).

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : laulau

Green : duid

Hawksbill : ulan

All nest in the vicinity, and all clutches found are eaten. Leatherback lays "same size eggs" as the others. They eat meat of all three species, which they turn on the beach if they see them. All species reported to nest during the windy season, and to nest in approximately equal numbers. Not caught at sea. Leatherback may be a little more plentiful than the others. Excess eggs sold in Madang Market, but meat not sold in the market. Hawksbill shell may be sold in the market or to tourists.

Sulamake Village. (near Matukar) Informant said that they do not eat the turtles or their eggs, but that they sell the eggs at the nearby plantation. May be Seventh Day Adventists who (except on Long Island!) are told not to eat the turtles and the eggs.

Matukar Village. Chief informant: Rawad Marun.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : dud (in the open sea)

Green : rui

Hawksbill : avile (plentiful over the reef)

\*Turtles called manuk.

Green (?) sometimes caught on fishing line. Nest in July and August (dry season). Leatherback lays 'once a year' in the wet season (December, January). 5 or 6 hawksbills are caught each year, with a spear or by hand. Leatherbacks are occasionally turned while nesting - one last year, none this year.

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West New Britain Province.

Joseph Batari, driver at Madang (with Wildlife Service) was from Hoskins (DHQ and SDHQ) in Kimbe Bay, West New Britain. Gave following information:

Only knew of two species:

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : bolu

Green : rava

Both species nest on a tiny offshore island near Hoskins. Also on the mainland. Leatherbacks may be caught both on land and in the waters; both species eaten. Reef present; both black and white sand in the area. Both species nest from November to January.

Hawksbill unknown.

Turtles are only eaten occasionally - mainly for feasts. Caught just before needed. Reportedly, only big ones (? breeding size) are brought in.

Western Province. Information collected by Brydgit Hudson.

Bula Village. (people recent immigrants to the coast, not very knowledgeable about turtles).

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : cherwat (names probably reversed)

Green : waru

Nesting takes place  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile down the coast from the village.

Anyone may collect eggs or turtles - no restraints. Likely to collect 2 or 3 basketfuls at a time.

Jari Village.

Vernacular names:

Green : cherwat (i.e. reversed)

Hawksbill : waru

Nesting takes place during the SE season - i.e. May-July - on Jari Flat Beach, near the village. Greens come a little later than the hawksbills. 80 eggs from one mid-April hawksbill nest.

According to informants Joe Muka and Biri Yariki, there were about 5 turtles nesting each night 25 years ago; now 1 or 2 per month on Jari Flat Beach. Only eggs taken nowadays - but all are taken. Leatherbacks, ridleys, loggerheads and flatbacks never seen.

#### Buji Village.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : onawu

Green : waru

Nearest nesting is on the backside of Boigu, in Australian waters.

Sigiadabu: 3 types:

Hawksbill : onau (only 'on big reef')

Green : waru-amul

Loggerhead? : nagrita (poisonous, not eaten)

Many more turtles seen on big sandbanks in Torres Strait. No leatherbacks, but flatbacks seen on Thursday Island. Ridley seen a long time ago. 10 greens killed the previous week, none the week before that.

Mabuduan. Big village, over 700 people. Different language group. Produce taken to Daru market. About 30 turtles consumed at home for each 40 sold on the market.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kara

Green : gamu

anva (third species, not identifiable)

Nesting takes place from October to December on small islands. Collected on Thursday Island sandbanks.

#### Masingara Village.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : koragame

Green : game

Loggerhead : babamukawa (eggs unknown)

\*3 species, other unknown. Taken to Daru market. Turtles and eggs collected on Tabayari Reef, SE of Daru. Old people do not report decline.



East Sepik District.

Kwala Village. 11 September 1978.

Informant: Patrick Mok.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : laraik

Large Green : chisanga (eat sea weeds)  
mungopul (same as chisanga)

Young Green : puri

Greens nest during calmer weather - April, May, June, July; leatherbacks nest during rougher weather, in December - January. Usually at least one per night in season, 3 to 4 on a good night.

'Older' leatherbacks lay 50 to 100 eggs, 5 to 10 of which are small and yolkless. Green turtle eggs are smaller and of uniform size, 100 to 200 in number. Both species are eaten; leatherbacks however, are very smelly - "like tinned fish." Both have rather oily meat; eaten at irregular intervals throughout the season. If they miss the turtle, they take the eggs. They nest on the same beach, a little further down the coast - no reef, black or white sand. 'Most' turtles nesting near the village are killed, though some escape. Meat is shared around the village without charge. General feeling is that the turtles are diminishing. No unexpectedly, the 'pun' is not seen to nest on the beach - informant believes that it must breed on the reef! Has seen hawksbill in Western Islands - local name ahulam - on Nahanu and nearby. Believed to nest locally. Eaten by local people.

Two laraik (leatherbacks) killed in May. Three killed around last Christmas. No green killed this year by informant; however, young greens are sometimes caught in fishing nets. Turtles may be eaten at any time, not just for feasts. However, in the Western Islands they are eaten for Christmas feasts.

Good nesting for both leatherbacks and greens reported from Karawop almost to Dagua - up to 6 or 7 leatherbacks per night, or 11 or 12 greens during their season. However, very little nesting reported for the offshore islands (kairuru, Mushu, Keresau, etc).

Gabriel Aitsi (with Wewak Fisheries Office) has seen tracks of nesting turtles in May to August on beach west of Wom Point, near Wewak.

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11 September 1978.

Informant Chris at Wom Point (seemed confused and unreliable) reported catching a large green the previous Friday, which he had given to his relatives in Wewak; needed 4 men to carry it.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : latok

Medium Green

or Hawksbill? : foin

Small Green? : kawaina

Big Green?? : sein

Loggerhead? : mogobul (large turtle with big head)

Finds leatherback nesting from August to December, which he kills with an axe on the head. Nesting depends on the tides and the moon - 1 or 2 per night in season. Plenty get back to the sea safely. Many (but not all) nests are collected. Leatherbacks lay 100 to 130 large eggs, 5 to 7 small ones.

A "Mogobul" shows two sets of eggs inside when slaughtered.

Foin and Kawaina do not nest in the vicinity - informant thought they might nest on the reef islands.

12 September 1978. (heavy rain night of 11/12).

Visited Laboin Island (very small, uninhabited, good beaches all around). Saw perhaps a dozen old nests (hawksbills), but recent rain had obliterated details.

Jock Campbell of Wewak Fisheries Office reports that the people on Keresau Island want to make a Wildlife Management Area on Unei (Buni?) Island off the western tip of Kairuru.

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Musschu Island. Sup Village.

Vernacular names:

Small Turtle : foin

Hawksbill : sang shake

Green : sang (straight)

\* Any kind of turtle : sang.

Loggerheads and leatherbacks unknown.

Hawksbills nest all year round, especially during the full moon. 120-130 eggs. Both green and hawksbills are good to eat; eggs also eaten. Turtles caught on the beach, and immature eggs found inside are also eaten. Caught at sea by spearing; nets not used as they break them.

Greens lay all year round, again with the full moon. 4 or 5 nest in a good night. All turtles found are killed, and eaten in the village; both eggs and meat may be taken to the market, but meat is shared around the village first.

Eggs sold at 5 for 10 toea; a turtle fetches K10-K30, depending on size. When preparing for a party, the villagers will go out in a canoe to spear one or more turtles. There used to be a 'magic man' who could call the turtles in, but he died without passing on his secrets. Another magic man at Yarik.

They wait for egg laying to finish, and then turn the turtle on its back. Many nests are missed, and they often see hatchlings making for the sea. Monitor lizards on the island dig out the nests and eat the eggs, but no reports on damage by dogs and pigs.

Greens and hawksbills nest in comparable numbers. A given hunting trip may capture as many as 6 or more turtles, but they only hunt rather irregularly.

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Belief of the informant is that there are plenty of turtles in the area; anyone who wants one can go out during the full moon and get one.

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Kairuru Island.

Informant : Brother William - Marius Brothers Mission  
Hatchling hawksbill caught near Kairuru- presumably from nest on the island.

-15 November 1976 large turtle (thought to be a hawksbill), about 1 meter long, was caught while nesting on Big Muschu.

A green caught at Marai laid 80 eggs.

Not many turtles seen around Kairuru - only sandy beaches are at Victoria Bay and the SE tip. Hawksbills are caught while sleeping under rocks on the reef - probably by both day and night, according to the informant. Hawksbill shell from Kairuru usually appears to be scratched and abraded, and is not used. Hawksbill more common than the green. Leatherbacks not seen (but informant has seen them in Malaysia). Believes that nesting is seasonal, but is unsure of limits of season. People on the island are not particularly commercially minded, and informant thinks that turtles are able to return safely to the sea some of the time when no-one is out to catch them.

Aitape. 13 September 1978.

Brother Paul - Saint Ignatius High School.

Reported two leatherbacks caught while nesting in June/July along the coast to the west, near Tepier Plantation between Aitape and Malol. Turtles were killed and eaten by the local school children, who smelled very bad for 2 or 3 days after. Eggs are sold in Aitape market, but not meat. Another was caught at Ulan while nesting.

Vanimo Village.

Informant: Andrew Laiu - Chairman V.L.C.C.; former policeman.  
Nesting season is March-April for all species.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : mombi

Hawksbill : muyu (not often seen)

Green : mulang

Loggerhead : mulu (?)

Leatherbacks nest close to the village and on the beach on the other side of Vanimo. When hunting them, they will take 1 or 2 in a night, but plenty more nest and are not caught at the same time. Eggs collected in the morning.

Further down the coast (Negra Village) nests are left undisturbed and hatchlings are seen running down to the sea.

Greens, hawksbills, and loggerheads are caught by harpoon.

"Mulu" described as almost as big as the green turtle, bigger than hawksbill; same color as the green; lay smaller eggs and more of them. Relatively short flippers. Green turtle is the most plentiful - 4 or 5 per night in season, on both the mainland and island (?) beaches.

Possibly 3 or 4 loggerheads nest each night during March-April. The hawksbill lays small eggs; only nest occasionally near Vanimo, usually on the islands. People go out fishing for turtles at any time; they are shared amongst the village. Turtles may be kept on their backs for 2-3 days, but not kept in corrals in the sea. Not normally sold in the market, rather, they are shared around freely among Wontoks.

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Wuvulu Island. 13-14 September 1978.

Two villages - Oni and Awa. Simon Kialo-informant in Awa.

Vernacular names:

(Leatherback not seen)

Green : ponu

Young green : laba

Hawksbill : matani

: alaba (used for all species)

Hawksbill and green nest on the island, but although reported to be seasonal, informant did not know the season.

Some hawksbill eggs were collected last month (August) on the other side of the island, but little nesting observed.

People do not eat turtles much - only once a month or so, by a few of the people. Eaten at feasts in former times, but no longer.

Turtles are still distributed among relatives. Not much interest in collecting the eggs. Nesting takes place sporadically and unpredictably almost anywhere on the island.

Green is more plentiful than the hawksbill. Meat is not exported to the mainland. Greens will re-nest 2 or 3 weeks later; not sure about hawksbill. Shell is used to make fishing hooks; also pleural bones are shaved down to a point and used for weapons (daggers and spears). Mark (European resident of Wuvulu) had some archaeological turtle-bone daggers and some new ones he had had made up, but this aspect of the culture (like most others) was lost with the advent of missionaries.

Young green turtles may be caught with spear and harpoon - hawksbills also-but only 2 or 3 times a year, just when wanted. The turtles sleep under rocks during the day and feed at night.

Kaniet Islands. (50 NE of Hermits)

Brian Culligan (on Wuvulu)-informant.

Plenty of turtles seen on this uninhabited island. Flat (4-5 feet above sea level). Two islands - one about 200 acres attached to the reef, 18 miles from Sae Island, which has lots of birds and crabs. Never identified.

Brian lived on Kaniet for 3 years. Turtles seemed to nest on a year-round basis, possibly most in August-September. 12-13 on a good night; 4-5 on a bad night. Eggs 80-123 (counted and returned to nests!). Green turtle commonest, only a few hawksbills. By 9 a.m. turtles are still to be seen on land, nesting or returning to the sea. Kaniets are by far the best turtle islands known to Brian.

Ninigo Islands. Seventh Day Adventist population, don't often bother turtles.

Wuvulu. 14 September 1978: Oni Village

Vernacular names:

- Large Green : ponu
- Medium Green : laba
- Small Green : matane

Quite common; lay eggs at Suke and Fanaro beaches. Probably August nesting. Young turtles are seen sometimes when eggs are not collected.

Wuvulu people stopped eating the eggs in 1952 (mission arrived). Numbers of turtles appear to have increased since people stopped eating them. Nesting takes place during high tides (reef usually exposed or very shallow by low tide).

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Leatherback captured while attempting to nest on July 31 1978 at Ataliklikun Bay. (9:30 p.m.) Died after 24 hours. Head 25 cm. wide; straight carapace 150 cm.; curved 160 cm.

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West New Britain.

Science Master-Graham Webster.

Talked with students from the S.D.A. school at Kambubu (Arthur Cloves, teacher). Pupils from Garu Village gave following information:

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : ora (nests near Garu Village)

Ridley : kamoagha (nests year-round at Garu (black beach) & plenty also on white sand areas just to the south)

Hawksbill : masse (nests from Garu towards Cape Gloucester; widely eaten).

Turtles are sometimes kept in stockades in the sea. Hawksbill shell used for bride price (carved pieces). Live turtles also used.

A leatherback nested on Kambubu (south of the river and plantation in NE New Britain) in early July (10th to 12th probably), on the black beach.

There is also black beach north of the river. Saw another from the plane at the tip of the Rabaul peninsula (inner side).

Nuguria. Talked with Lauata Tevavea, employee of New Guinea shells in Rabaul, who is from Nuguria.

Two species seen:

Vernacular names:

Green : unamia

same names used in Tasmans (also Polynesian)

Hawksbill: mahana

Both nest locally, all year round, on the uninhabited islands. (Two islands are inhabited, one with a village, the other with a plantation). 3 big islands, about 30 small ones. Turtles are eaten frequently, though not every day, and are caught both on beaches and in the water. They are not exported. The meat from turtles caught is distributed free of charge to the people of the island. The shell is thrown away (even of the hawksbill). Both kinds eat sea grass. 4 or 5 can be caught in the lagoon in one day. They are caught by hand, and all sizes are found. By beach walking, one is only liable to get about one per night. Baby turtles are often seen on the beach, both day and night. No known tambus protect the turtles.

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New Ireland Province.

Mapua Island. (off east coast of New Ireland)

Talked with Joseph Lamangau (fellow plane passenger from Rabaul) from Mapua.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : brotis (6 or 7 people needed to manhandle it)

Green : vodara (best eating; eats grass and 'stones')

Green turtle shell not used for jewelry. Vodara is the commonest and the only one known to nest in the Tabar Islands. Turtles in general are called vo.

Leatherbacks only caught in the sea; less than one per year is brought in. Hawksbills are not seen nesting; only caught on the reef and near the mangroves; informant did not know where they nest. Mating pairs not seen. Not used for feasts; eaten whenever caught - which is not very often. No tambus known, but a few people 'fear magic' and refrain from eating turtle.



Turtles are caught most easily during calm weather; seen when they come up to breathe, or float with floating rubbish (greens only - hawksbills not seen floating). Nesting occurs year round, with the full moon, and when there is lightning. Island has Catholic mission (founded by Germans in 1935).

When there is lightning, people walk the beaches to find nesting turtles; but if they miss them they will collect the eggs the next day. Informant believes that the best area for nesting is a small, treeless, sandy island off Simberi Island, known as Marovie Gulagulavatu (= 'coral island').

Not easy to catch turtles when they dive; they are more easily caught when asleep on the reef or when they are busy eating stones and weeds. They may be speared or caught by hand, with one hand above the head and one above the tail. May be caught by anyone, but certain individuals become specialized in catching turtles. If the turtle is turned upside down under water, it will surface by itself.

#### Namatanai, New Ireland.

Photographed carapaces of three green turtles hanging on walls - house of A. Tozser, A.P.C. P.O. Namatanai, New Ireland and one at neighbor's house.

#### Mussau Island.

Talked with Councillor Abe Malle, daughter Sali, and Moses - Secretary, at Eloaue Village (199 people in village).

13 or 14 villages around the coast of the large island of Mussau - Eloaue is on a small island to the south. Emirau also has several villages.

Four villages are involved in W.M.A. (Eloaue, Nonavi, Emananusa, Boliu).

Boloma Group. Wildlife Management Area.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : maringana

Green : kulut (juveniles are koituga tevla)

Some doubt about the names, probably because the people have not eaten turtle for so many years that they no longer pay much attention to them. Councillor thought our picture of the loggerhead might be 'maringana'.

Turtles nest all year round; sometimes by day in November; at night from January to April. Nest by high tide (probably because extensive reefs are exposed by low tide). Abe's father ate turtle meat in the old days.

Turtles are regularly ripped off by visiting people from outside, including government employees such as the malaria spray teams, who come once or twice a year on government trawlers. They kill about ten each night they are here, catching them in the water only. They either eat them themselves or sell them in the Kavieng market. Another report said that the teams only get two or three turtles each visit. Turtles are also taken by highlanders employed at the sawmill on Mussau itself (run by Mr. Stein). Visitors shoot turtles with spearguns and chase them with small dinghies.

An instruction went out in early February 1978 to all visitors to stop killing turtles. Councillor Abe wrote to the Council Chamber at Palakau (Patrol Post for Mussau and Emirau - close to Boliu) but no answer received to date (late September 1978).

In June and July there was a fight when Eloaue Villagers arrested some people from Massau Island fishing on their reefs. They were jailed for a month and fined 20 Kina.

Best turtle beaches are on Eloaue and Emananusa - Emirau also good, but Mussau itself not good. Tench Island, east of Emirau, has no beach.

Outsiders not allowed to fish, catch turtles, molluscs, or collect coral; these can only be collected by islanders, and outsiders must purchase them from them.

Etalima Beach - S.W. Eloae Island. 22 September 1978.

Landing on the beach at 5:30 p.m. we saw 4 adult greens and one young. One adult was definitely male. A total of 33 turtles were seen off the beach before darkness intervened - all those that could be seen were greens. When they saw the boat they usually made off at high speed.

The beach was not very long - half a mile at most - and had very little sand that was above the high tide line. Littered with many logs and huge trees, often growing out horizontally. About two dozen recent or fairly recent nests were visible, some with tracks. No evidence of beach predation of any kind.

Informant: Councillor Abe's father, Malle.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : maringara (plentiful, showed us two pieces of shell of a female that had been accidentally wedged under a log and killed in 1973).

Green : kulut

Young Green : kortu ('thin shelled')

Leatherback : unknown

In the old days they used to hunt turtles by chasing with canoes, using harpoons. Also the nesting turtles were killed at Etalima Beach as they came ashore to nest. Turtles were caught both for feasts and for day-to-day eating purposes. The turtles were not hunted since the establishment of the mission in 1931, and since then they have increased considerably (latter was universal opinion).

Good nesting beaches:

Taluenalu Beach (Taluenalu Plantation; Mussau Island).

Tarseonemonu Beach (Emananusa Island).

Elewa Beach (Emirau Island).

Atuetue Beach (Emirau Island).

A boy said he saw hatchlings at Etalima Beach this August.

Found one marginal scute of a hawksbill turtle on the beach near the end of the airstrip on Aloae Island.

Young green turtle caught by P.C.H.P. just off Etalima Beach, as we patrolled looking for nesting turtles. Absolutely immaculate, beautiful animal.

Curved carapace: 56.5 cm.

Curved width : 51 cm.

Plastron straight length : 43 cm.

• Plastron total width : 48 cm.

#### Manga, New Ireland.

Talked with Father Gambusa (from Chicago) and Anton Ginong from village just east of Manga. Also Tarcissius Sigintue from the Tanga Islands (arrived in Manga early 1978).

Vernacular names as described by Anton:

Leatherback : mambu

Hawksbill : pun

Green : pun

Gambusa saw a leatherback nesting near Manga in June, 1978, and Tarcissius saw two tracks last month (August, 1978). Leatherbacks will follow a light and be conducted to a cooking area! Gambusa likes eating the meat, provided they don't get too much sand in it; he thinks they 'follow the setting sun' when they follow a lamp.

Easter to June is main leatherback season. Greens more plentiful than leatherbacks in the water. Gambusa has only seen the leatherback which nests on the beach in front of the mission (black sand, no reef). Thinks it is also common down the coast to the south.

Tarcissius agrees that only leatherbacks nest near Manga - has only seen the big tracks. However, Anton claims to have seen pun tracks also.

However, in the waters Tarcissius says that he doesn't see the mambu, only lots of hawksbills and somewhat fewer greens. Eggs collected are eaten in the village, raw or cooked; not traded. In 1968 he saw a leatherback killed near the river north of Manga.

#### Tanga Islands. Tarassius Sigintue, informant.

Turtles depleted; formerly 5 or 6 in one night, but no longer. Both greens and hawksbills are called 'fun'. Need to swim for 2 or

3 hours now to find one turtle. Has seen hatchlings on Boang Island. The leatherback does not nest on Tanga. Other two species about equally common. Greens seen in shallow water, hawksbills over the reef. Saw a leatherback nesting at Lamussang in 1976, close to Christmas time.

Vernacular names as described by Cecilia Lubin (wife of Tarcissius from Lamussang):

Leatherback : bortis

Green and Hawksbill : un

Both species lay in April/May, once or twice a season.

Turtles more abundant than at Tanga Islands. When diving, Tarcissius finds greens and hawksbills in about the same numbers.

Anton: When signs are right (i.e. full moon, tide right) people walk the beach to look for turtles.

A leatherback came up on September 3 at Manga; the eggs were eaten but the turtle got away. More expected.

Hawksbill nests for about two months soon after Christmas. In former times the scutes were used for jewelery, but not any more. If seen, the nesting turtles are killed; if not, the eggs are collected. Has not seen greens nesting. They ate two leatherbacks last year (1977). Father Gandusa takes his rifle out and shoots at turtles for target practice.

Kapsipau. (south of Manga: between east Cape and Cape Mimas)

Of seven turtles that nested recently, three were eaten and four went back to the sea (eggs of all were eaten). Judging by the egg size, they were leatherbacks.

Gandusa estimates that ten are harvested per year from East Cape to Cape Mimas.

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New Britain.

Informant: Markus from Matawud Village, Ataliklikun Bay.

## Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : apapel

Green : unwal

Loggerhead? : upun

Supposed to nest on the other side of the bay, further from Habitations, but are seen in the water on this side. They are caught by diving - turned over in the water and brought to the surface. Some people use the shell.

Stopped at a small village near the logging ramp at Ataliklikun Bay. Saw an adult ridley shell hanging on the wall. Dimensions:

Curved length : 69.5 cm.

Curved width : 67.0 cm.

Straight width : 59.6 cm.

Straight length : 67.0 cm.

Six costals on each side. Shell hanging on wall of Francis' house. Jakobus Nabakabi sson arrived; he said that the turtle had been caught in June and he had seen them cut it up. They have a season for about two months in Ataliklikun Bay, when two or three may nest each night. Has seen a hawksbill nesting at Kokopa but no greens.

Rabaul.

Talked with Mr. R.A. Coase (Australian) - local fisheries inspector. Reported illicit export of hawksbill shells by Japanese tuna boats; hope this may have been stopped by the bust (with confiscation and loss of fishing license) in 1976; though it is harder to find time to inspect the timber boats, and many get away with a lot. Last prosecution yielded a load of 20 eviscerated hawksbills in a drum of formalin; they had reportedly been caught off Stockholm Plantation (NW of New Britain). In other cases, the larger scutes are removed by heat (we saw a photo of 13 such specimens), the rest being left to rot.

10-15 greens per night nesting at Bramble Cay (October to December). Has not seen nesting turtles in P.N.G. but has seen them surfacing for air at Samarai and Emirau.

At Rottok Bay and Arawe, greens and hawksbills are caught in large numbers in a specially made net designed for catching dugongs.

In the Torres Strait Islands, it is reported that they have to cut a 'neck gland' out of the hawksbill turtle to make it safe for eating.

Sable Island, near the Niguria Islands, is said to be a good nesting area.

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Turama River - Mr. Coase saw nesting by Carettochelys.

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Tasman Island. Information from Sioni, employee of New Guinea Shells in Rabaul.

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : musana

Green : unamea

Both nest seasonally, but the actual season is unknown.

When nesting turtles are found, both eggs and turtles are eaten. Also caught from canoes (turtles are speared or jumped upon) - one jumps into water, and someone else then gets in the water to help him get it into the boat. Turtles are eaten both at feasts and at any other time. Not sold, but eaten or distributed by the catcher.

Pieces of hawksbill shell are sharpened and used for tattooing young girls. All the people (300-400) live on one island.

Turtles are eaten occasionally - not a major staple in the diet. They count days after seeing a fresh nest; informant thinks 3 to 4 weeks later.

New Britain. East of Rabaul, below Cape Gazelle.

Saw an adult hawksbill, trussed up, that had been caught on the beach 25 September 1978 beside the Watta Planation. It had laid 144 eggs.

## Dimensions:

Straight carapace = 78 cm.

Curved carapace (length) = 83.5 cm.

Straight width = 60.4 cm.

Width over curve = 72 cm.

Weight (taken on copra. co. scales) = 107½ lbs.

Very little serration at back. Minimal scute overlap - appears old.

Reported to be a September to January nesting season.

Hawksbill called amiae, is the only species nesting right there (white sand beach). Eggs hatch into birds, snakes and crocodiles as well as turtles (!) - saw it with his own eyes. Informant was alerted to this nesting by cries of seabirds about midnight. Turtle was turned after nesting, at about 1 a.m.

Meat is distributed free to relatives. About one nesting per week in the area. Some turtles get back to the sea safely, but eggs are collected whenever found. 100-150 per nest, though big ones reported to lay 240-250. Sea grass found in stomachs (confusion with greens? especially since some of the turtles are reported to be "much bigger" than the one in hand). People never get sick from eating turtle; all food from the sea is assumed to be safe.

Went into manager's house at Watta Plantation; two green turtle shells on the wall (46, 74 cm curved lengths). Said to be locally caught. Informant (a hausboi) did not realize they were a different species.

Ganai Village. Coast of New Britain, north of the Warangoi River mouth, near Vunabaur Plantation (south of Cape Gazelle)

Informant: Tomas Wongau

## Vernacular names:

Leatherback : mabua

Hawksbill : lappi

Green : ngalngal

Also a small species, with a red, white, and black shell, and a beak like a parrot, called 'lib bilong talis' ("Tal's Leaf").



Possibly small hawksbill - reported to be smaller than the 'lappi'.  
Kutun = name for turtles in general.

Leatherback plentiful, nest all around, but only in May! Eggs large and soft - but 'bad' ones small and elongate. 1-3 per night. 100-200 good eggs (he thinks). Meat perfectly edible. Caught while nesting; 3 to 4 men needed to turn it over. Eggs are eaten. Meat is distributed free to friends and relatives. Whole thing is eaten except the shell. Get one every 1-2 weeks during the season. Hawksbill also said to nest locally in May (but a shell was collected, still stinking somewhat, of one that had nested locally during that last week in August).<sup>A</sup> Can be two in one night, but at other times only one per week. Use same reefless beach as leatherbacks. Ancestors used shell for rings, armbands, etc, and these are still sometimes made.

Green also nests locally in May; 100-300 eggs, smaller than the leatherback eggs and rather similar to those of the hawksbill.

Small turtles are speared while fishing, but big ones are only caught on land. Small leatherbacks are not seen.

Meat of the leatherback has a strong smell, but green and hawksbill meats are similar to each other, and are preferred to leatherback.

Leatherback commonest of the 3; hawksbill rarest.

Lambon Island. Informant: Moses Arbide, Air Niugini baggage officer at Rabaul.

All species called apun in the Tolei language.

Leatherbacks do not nest on Lambon itself, but near Metlek Plantation on the east coast, near the southern tip of New Ireland.

Leatherbacks nest from September to January (black beach, rough seas). Hawksbill is more common, but nests on white beaches.

Leatherback (Mambu) only caught while nesting.

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\* Strongly overlapping scutes.

Length (straight) = 76.5 cm.

Length (over curve) = 78.5 cm.

Width (straight) = 61.5 cm.

Width (over curve) = 75 cm.

(Deposited in National Museum).

Hawksbill caught both on land and in water.

Shell formerly used for manufacture of combs etc. Now only used casually, as a hobby etc.

Turtle Tambus. (As described by Sylvia Spring)

Wewak. Cape Wom Village = formerly a turtle tambu; believed that their tribe was descended from a green turtle, so they did not eat sea turtles of any kind. Tambu broke down during WWII when people were starving - Japanese took all their food, from their gardens etc., and ate anything. Outsiders were not stopped from getting turtles.

Manus. (Ponam Island):

A 'sacred net' made of hibiscus-like fiber is used for catching turtles; it is looked after by one man and kept in a special house called 'hausboi' (hausboi is where the men stay while making the net, not the house where the net is kept). Has very wide mesh, so fish and small turtles can escape. Skill for making the net is confined to 2 or 3 families. When a new net is made, it is delivered to the net keeper, who keeps it in a corrugated tin net house. Has carved wooden floats along the top. About 15" square mesh. Women cannot go into the 'hausboi' during a turtle hunt.

Fishermen's Island.

Sex tambus - a man cannot sleep with his wife before going out to catch turtles. If a turtle hunter dies, elaborate funeral feasts are held, sexual abstinence is practiced, etc.

Bougainville. Informant from travel agent in Waigani who spent 2½ years in the Kieta vicinity.

Hardback turtles only seen; up to about one meter long. Turtles often seen on Pukpuk Island, near Kieta\* and on adjacent mainland coast and nearby islands (\*on Zoones Islands). (Black beach all along eastern coast; islands have white beaches). Turtles are sold in

the Kieta Market. Often seen around Two Tree Island. All along the coast from Aropa south, people eat turtle frequently - once or twice a week. They are mainly caught by spearing from canoes, in the islands at night. Eggs not seen.

Information from Frank Holland (Alotau - spent 6 years in the Trobriands).

Much predation by monitor lizards on turtle eggs in the lesser islands of the Trobriand area. Lots of monitors on Simlindon to Nibu - they may be attracted by throwing carrion, such as dead fish on the beach. Lizards are not eaten by the local people, though a few are used for skins for drumheads (often cruelly skinned alive by the locals). Not many goannas on the islands west of Arinai (between Trobriands and Fergusson). Plenty of turtles seen on the reef running south of Yakuta (Trobriands), but nesting not seen.

Lots of turtles (and dugongs) seen in the grassy areas of Goodenough, between Bolubolu and Kalimatabutabu.

Lots of young turtles (mostly hawksbills, some greens) seen around Tewara and Wata, north of Fergusson.

In the Western District, it is believed that the hawksbill is poisonous, but certain individuals can tell what part has to be cut out and thrown away to make it safe.

Holland has seen leatherbacks swimming in Milne Bay (5-6 times). Local political leaders at the turtle briefing also said that they had seen a leatherback in the bay, and thought it might be the same one each time. (moss or barnacles on its back - but possibly saw the light spots and tuberculate ridges?). Leatherbacks also seen by Holland in the channel between Losuia and Tuma (around Kaileena), 3 or 4 times. Deep water - around 200 fathoms.

Egum Atoll. (south of Tabunagora)

Is a good place for getting turtle eggs during the northwest season (November-March). May get as many as 10 nests on a visit. Have seen turtles nesting on the calm (west) side of the reef south of the Trobriands, around the time of the start of the nesting season.

Many big turtles may be seen in the Woodlark Lagoon (between the west entrance and Nasai Island); grassy bottom. Nesting occurs on Sharp Island.

Tuff. (on the north coast):

Although this is fiord country, without beaches, Holland says he lived on turtle eggs there for three months; turtle meat also. The eggs probably came from a stretch of beach, 500-600 yards long, 20-30 miles south of Tuff.

Many turtles live on the inner side of Tawa Tawa Mal Reef. Also many on Brooker Island (which has about 200 inhabitants).

On Goodenough, from Kilia south, 6 or so turtles were seen on one flight.

Pelochelys observation:

Frank Holland reported that he saw 30-40 individuals, each about 3 feet long along the coast of the Western District between Miakussa and the Irian Jaya borders, 2 or 3 miles out, in about 4 fathoms. One was shot and brought on board bleeding; but it gave off such a bad smell that they threw it back. Flexible hind shell margin. Bit repeatedly and retracted head completely. Bit and twisted off a piece of the paddle. Somewhat smaller specimens were seen in the Fly and Strickland rivers and Lake Murray by Holland. Frank Narva of Daru : good turtle contact.

2 October 1978.

Watanou Village. North coast of Milne Bay - few miles east of Alotau.

Informant was Councillor Bennet.

Vernacular names:

Small turtles (hawksbills & small greens) : tokitikan

Large turtles (large greens & leatherbacks) : waigaporlana

Turtles nest on Kerotene Island off Divinai (east of Watanou); eggs are collected by people of Divinai Village. Do not nest at Watanou (beach stony).

Turtles are speared in the water - whatever kind, whenever seen, without restriction or tambu. Cooked in their shells; shells not utilized but thrown away. Turtles are not hunted specifically but are caught opportunistically on fishing trips. Sometimes don't see any, but at other times 2 or 3 in a night. No preference for meat of any one species, Turtles containing eggs (shelled or unshelled) are found sometimes, but informant does not recall the season. Informant reported an apparent increase in number of turtles since 1966.

2 October 1978.

Bubuleta Village. (3 or 4 km. from Divinai; north coast of Milne Bay).

Vernacular names:

Loggerhead ? : wadala (large, hardshell)

Hawksbill : tutukitahu

Turtles nest on the island off Bubuleta, called Badilamoinana Island. 2 or 3 men needed to lift a nesting-size turtle.

Nesting in November/December; nests seen by chance when on the island for fishing; do not patrol the beach. Both kinds good to eat; hawksbill used for making ear rings. Thinks numbers have decreased.

Tagula Island. Bobohai Village (Western Point)

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : kiwi? (small eggs; found on reefs close to mainland)

Green : gobutalyai (large eggs; meat good eating; plenty of fat; found on the reef)

Some nesting all year round, but May to July best season. Did not use the shell in former years, but now kept to sell to crew of government trawlers. Turtles still plentiful. Green and hawksbill about equally common and both eat seaweed, but hawksbill found closer to shore. Not hunted specially and not just for feasts, but caught

incidentally while fishing.

Turtles are killed when caught, and the meat dried and brought into the village for distribution. Not a major part of the diet, in view of the abundance of fish. Never seen leatherback.

Horole Sevalaloale (D.P.I. -Tagula): believes people of Calvados Chain may eat turtle more often. Has seen leatherback once off Eastern Normandy and once in deep sea off Fergusson. Taiwanese fishermen are ripping off the clams from the reefs, and probably taking turtles too when they find them.

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Misima Island. Bwagoia

John Bartlett - A.D.C. (D.O.I.C.). Sees turtles caught at Brooker Island brought in for sale in the market (meat, not eggs). Turtles found on the north coast of Misima, requiring 2 or 3 men to lift them, but probably no nests because the beaches have villages; most turtles found further south. Turtles from Motorina also brought in. People on Brooker probably eat a lot of turtles; they lay claim to the reefs around Bramble Haven etc.

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Tufi.

Informant: Wellington Geroro - D.P.I. Alotau

Plenty of turtles seen in water around Tufi. Two beaches - Kofore and Komoa but has not seen nesting there. People do not hunt the turtles because other kinds of meat easier to obtain. In informant's father's time, it was tambu to eat turtles; they were used in sorcery. In his grandfather's time, only a few clans ate them. Turtle populations are apparently increasing. The turtles are sometimes caught for their shell, especially when tourists request one or two for this purpose.

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Woodlark Island. Guasopa.

Informants (local turtle hunters from Guasopa; seemed very

reliable).

Iobu-Ribai

Simion Sauna

Moiomai Onalega

Keni Bogeiega

Aipen Manudele

Translator: Alledi Daniel

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : paun

Loggerhead : ponoana

Green : tadei (5 men to lift; shell smooth & 'soft')

Ridley and leatherback unknown. Green commonest; then hawksbill; then loggerhead. Latter usually seen on beach, not in the water.

All nest mainly on the Ginetu Islands and Egum Atoll. Mostly in December to February, some in March/April. Green lay largest eggs, loggerhead intermediate, hawksbill smallest. Mating seen in October/November. Turtles are eaten about once a month, usually caught at sea by grabbing or by spearing. Sometimes kept alive for a while by tethering by a hind flipper to something on the beach, when the children play with them. Later killed for food. Corrals not used. Turtles used for feasts - had about 30 for one feast, all big greens.

Green most favored for eating, loggerhead least because of the smell, and they usually let them go.

Hawksbill shell is used for limestick (for betelnut kit) and for earrings. Used to sell shell to Don Neate, but shell no longer sold. Turtles seem to be increasing at sea but less often seen nesting. Loggerhead nests during good weather in December.

Most turtles are caught during the calm weather period (October to January) which largely coincides with nesting.

On a good beach, 6 or 7 turtles may nest in a night; mostly greens. Hawksbills tend to come up earlier in the night. (Guasopa Point; Ginetu Island; Egum Islet; Sharp Island area). They don't nest on the north coast of Woodlark, and are rare on Laughlan Island.

Nesting usually at night by high tide; once seen nesting by day. They swim in Laughlan Island lagoon but do not nest there.

Hatchlings seen in March. No-one lives on Ginetu but do on Egun. Turtles hunted sporadically, usually at night; make special trips for turtle, not always successful. Can be eaten by anyone.

Leatherbacks reported to nest around Cape Pierson Normanby Island, by Obede Gisawa, where beach is soft. In Christmas 1977, a leatherback nested on Woodlark Island (Wuabununa Beach, south coast). Called wedala on Normanby. Can tell when they will nest by watching the weather. People of Woodlark did not like the taste of the leatherback - too much oil. Also no shell. Turtles may be seen at any time of the year swimming over the Woodlark reef by high tide.

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Other versions of names for Woodlark turtles (from questionnaire):

Green : ulalita, tadiyaya, tadiyai

Hawksbill : pav, pawa

Loggerhead : ponowan, punowan

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Trobriand Islands. Losuia

Informant : Tom Towowoda, from a village close to Losuia;  
Fisheries Officer.

Vernacular name:

wonu : used for green and hawksbill

Saw a leatherback in the water once; it dived when approached. Main turtle hunters are from Kaileuna Islands and Kuia Islands, west of Losuia. Also people from Simsim and Kawa Islands.

Turtles nest on Bubian Island and Kuaniagal Island in September to November. During the season there might be 5 per night on Nubian, 2 per night on Kuaniagal.

Turtles caught opportunistically - sleeping turtles caught by hand, and sometimes speared. Hawksbill used for shell. Meat occasionally sold in market, 2 or 3 times per year. K10-K15 for a big turtle. Mostly greens, few hawksbill. Goamas present on the islands.

A certain clan group has a tambu against eating turtles, saying that they know it would make them sick. Believes the turtles are



increasing as they are not being hunted as much nowadays.

On Long Island in August 1972, he saw a turtle "every 3 steps for 50 yards along the beach."

Fergusson Island. Salamo

Informants from different nearby villages.

Moses Lelela from Dobu Island

Kennie Lehua from Salamo

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : wedara

Hawksbill : ianva (commonest; hard shell, sleeps in corral)

Green : iaewa (young plentiful; thin shell, swims on surface of water)

Loggerhead and ridley virtually unknown

All three species nest on Fergusson and Normanby.

Leatherback comes up on beaches around Cape Pierson -August/September and November/December, on moonlit nights. 1 or 2 at a time. Lay 100 eggs or more, large and small. Nest in soft sand. One was killed in 1958.

Hawksbill lays sporadically on Fergusson, and more regularly on the Ampletts and Anchorage groups.

Adult greens usually found around remote, uninhabited islands. Species is sometimes caught around Fergusson. Young are the best to eat.

David Duigu (teacher, originally from Normanby) has seen a leatherback speared off Cape Pierson. They are sometimes caught in a gigantic net, about 150 yards long, 20-30 feet high, wide meshed, made by the people of Dobu. Caught mainly around July to September; have caught 20 or more over the years. Net is made by the whole clan, under direction of one man.

Hawksbill shell is used for lime spatula, combs, etc. - private use only. Hawksbill nests in October to December - the commonest turtle in local waters, but nesting rarely seen. Teacher says turtles are getting rarer; but the villages say that turtles are now actually increasing as the younger generation has little interest in eating

them.

Turtles are used for post-marital gifts to the family of a bride. Turtles are consumed at feasts, especially when ceremonially breaking a wormout canoe or launching a new canoe or net.

The big net on Dobu is made by a cooperative effort of people from several villages. Fergusson Islanders make nets for fish, not for turtles.

Young greens and hawksbills caught in about equal numbers. Only hawkbill seen nesting on Fergusson, and that is rare. 20-30 people will fish for a week, catching 25-30 turtles, when preparing for a feast. 'Fences' (crawls) not used. Meat is sometimes smoked.

Turtle meat not seen in Esa'ala market. Hunt mostly around Salamo.

Turtle, although caught incidentally, are quite important part of the diet in the east Sanaroa Islands; Bibeu Point (Normanby); Granawe Point, where there are reefs and long sandy beaches.

#### Goodenough Island.

Informants from different villages around the island.

Lawrence Iaubihi - L.C.C. President, Goodenough

Anni Anna - Wildlife Committee

The name won is used for all species of turtle. Hawksbill is siwesiwe, but although the green and leatherback are known, they have no special names.

Turtles seen regularly in the water, and hunted all the time. Some nesting, but little, occurs from October to January. (species unknown).

Were more plentiful before 1950's, when they were extensively hunted on the beaches, and eggs eaten. Eggs are no longer brought in.

Hawksbill shell is used for earrings, lime stick, etc. - formerly sold artifacts to outsiders, but no longer.

Turtle meat sold in Goodenough market - K5 - K6 for a small one, but K10-12 for a large green. Formerly exchanged meat occasionally

rather than sold. Most hunting and spearing is done in the Ampletts Islands and at Gwabegwabe (Hughes Bay), N.W. Fergusson,

At latter area people can get 4-6 turtles per night. About 6 turtles per month sold in the Goodenough market, brought in by people from Gwabegwabe and Ampletts. Greens and hawksbills in about equal numbers. Seaweeds found in stomachs of both kinds; in captivity will eat bananas, pawpaw, etc.

4-6 turtles may be caught for a feast (marriage or death). Not for bride price, but used for a food replacement after the marriage. Now used for a party, held for no special reason.

Leatherbacks known to nest occasionally by high tide and high wind, but meat is not seen on the market very often. Nest on open beaches north of Vivigani; used to eat it more often before 1950. All agreed that turtles were becoming fewer; Councillor and Wildlife Committee seemed receptive to the idea of making rules to control turtle hunting.

Turtles traditionally caught by diving after them and noosing a flipper. Now harpoons usually used (not nets). Turtle turned over in the water cannot dive deeper. People of any age may eat turtle meat, but there may be a few in a clan who cannot eat it. Some people specialize in hunting turtles. Hatchlings not seen. Goodenough's people do not hunt them outside their own reef.

John Standing (Provincial Affairs, Bolubolu) has seen most turtles at Bramble Haven, Tortlesse Island, Conflicts, Tawaii Reefs in his nine years around Milne Bay. Nesting between September and December - may be a dozen tracks on a small island.

Now over 10,000 people on Goodenough, 8½ thousand on Fergusson. Possibly some nesting on western Fergusson; has seen nesting on Sunday Island.

#### Lake Lavu. Fergusson

Two kinds of crocodile, bird of paradise, hornbills, eclectus parrot, bush fowl, bush pigeons, pythons, wild pigs abundant.

Cape Vogel. Milne Bay Province (northern coast).

Informants: Father Titus Erika - Catholic Mission

Ramon Ogerem - elderly informant

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : maboroboro ('thick shell')

Young Green : wokeara

Green : kekepona (normally not on the reef; seen in sandy lagoons)

Turtles nest on beaches south of Cape Vogel and on Ikava Island (i.e. Kibirisi Point). Both nest by high tide but season not known. Turtles usually caught at night with tilley lamp, and speared in the neck. Both greens and hawksbills are good to eat. Greens more plentiful. Tortoiseshell earrings made in former times but now stopped. A few people will keep the whole shell, but none to be seen at the moment.

Turtle meat is shared around the village, not sold. Turtles caught incidentally.

Some clans cannot eat turtle meat (tambu), including Kibirisi people; when they get turtles they give them to the mission village. Old man does not think turtle populations have changed.

Turtles not hunted very often but sometimes caught accidentally in fishing nets. Turtle eaters will also dig up turtle nests.

Have not seen either leatherback or loggerhead.

Kaputa Village. near Rabaraba

Vernacular names:

Both green and hawksbill : monu

A leatherback nested near the village in either 1966 or 1973(!) Was killed. Good eating. Shell not tough. Sirisiri Villagers killed one at the same time just north of here. Only ones they know about.

Greens and hawksbills nest on the beach during harvest time (just one month - August). About two per night; no lunar correlation. All the turtles and all the eggs found are eaten. Mostly green.

Plenty of turtles found in the sea. Mostly greens, which taste better than hawksbills. Meat shared, not sold. No tambus.

Turtle shell and egg shells mixed with the soil when planting yams - fertilizer. Reported to be effective.

Turtles hunted sporadically, when they feel like turtle meat. Hunted by day by divers with goggles and speared in the neck. Have about 2 or 3 for a feast. Believe the turtles are diminishing but can still find one or two when needed. Weather is calm for catching turtles in September/October and calm periods also occur in other months. Catch about one turtle per week. Tortoiseshell used for earrings and combs.

Have not seen loggerheads or ridleys.

Normanby Island. Sehulea.

Vernacular names:

Leatherback : wedara

Greens and Hawksbills : tameara

Lay on beaches around the mouth of river near Cape Pierson. Found one last month (leatherback), but usually June/July or November/December (split season?). Not many leatherbacks - assume they are more common in the SE islands. Usually catch greens and hawksbills in the water.

Killed 2 leatherbacks last year, only 1 this year. Good to eat but very greasy - smaller species are better.

Meat is shared and shell of hawksbill usually thrown away, but smaller ones are sometimes kept for house decoration or for making earrings, combs, and lime sticks. Leatherbacks only lay big eggs - small ones inside are for the next nesting. Leatherbacks are expected to nest during lightning and dry weather. Look for them at that time. Sometimes they miss the turtle but get the eggs - perhaps once a year. Eggs hard to find and hatchlings have not been seen.

Gave a talk to the Milne Bay Government Meeting.

One suggested that rifles were now being used to kill turtles, and that this should be banned.

Leatherback seen in Milne Bay in July this year. May be the same one that has been sighted for the last ten years.

Baibara. (south coast)

Informants: Trevor Baker - owner of plantation and airstrip.  
Toby Kokoa - Nabi Village Chief.

Vernacular names:

Turtles called eiei ('ayeaye'), one big, one small kind.

Not great fishermen, but do go out to get fish and turtles.

Toby : Only seen one leatherback, a long time ago, in Orangerie Bay. Sometimes nest during the SE season (in June) or at the beginning of the NW season (February), he thinks. Leatherbacks are also good to eat.

Smaller turtles commonly found on the island reefs.

Only fish about once a month, using the gill net that does not catch the turtles.

Baker used to export hawksbill shell to Samarai, but no longer. Only 20% or less of turtles caught locally are hawksbills.

Used to dive a lot off Tagula, and saw lots of turtles (over 80% greens) on the outer barrier reefs.

People here (i.e. Baibara) eat turtle about 5 or 6 times per year. Usually get the turtles when nesting, and share it around the different villages in the area. At anytime of the year, turtles may be speared in the water by night with a light. Green: 100-120 large eggs. Hawksbill: 30 small eggs (he thinks - but only takes as many as needed). Local people are migrants from the hills, so make little traditional use of turtles.

Godaisu language vernacular names:

Green : motia

Hawksbill: koko

No name for leatherbacks - not seen enough

Adele Island. Off the tip of Rossel Island, is very good for turtles, (mostly greens) as well as dugongs.

Wallis Island. (52 km. NW of Wewak)

(Questionnaire from Oto Kaiwor, 32).

## Vernacular names:

Leatherback : yaatan (mainly mainland)

Green : sanga (many)

Ridley : lat (mainland)

Hawksbill : boudi (many)

Reports a tambu on killing turtles when stocks are low.

Kabilomo. Duke of Yorks (E.N.B.)

Vernacular names used at Nakanei - W.N.B.P:

Leatherback : vovolasmusai

Green : ebove

Ridley : lasasa

Hawksbill : lapagogo

Fishermen's Island. (Daugo Island) 10 October 1978.

Informant : Ali Vele

Vernacular names recognized:

Leatherback : corner vaivai

Green : aoao

Flatback : kikila

Ridley : aovuana

Hawksbill : gela

Loggerhead : niukali

Commonest in the water is the green; commonest on land is the hawksbill (i.e. nesting). But although year round, there is less than one hawksbill per week. Lay 100 plus eggs, smaller than those of the green, usually on the far beach, but occasionally on the beach by the village.

Greens are the ones usually caught, and the preferred eating species. Lay larger eggs than the hawksbill, also 100+. Nest during the wet season. Caught on land or in the water (in nets or with spears). No tambus recognized.

Greens (and occasionally others) are taken to the Port Moresby market; sold piece by piece, and up to K50 for the whole turtle. All informants felt that the turtles were not disappearing, but were as common as ever. Turtles caught for domestic consumption are distributed free of charge among relatives. They may be kept for up to a week on their backs, either in a canoe, or on land; periodically wetted down. No information about repeat nesting.

Shell of the hawksbill (only) may be kept; sold piece by piece in Moresby for 60-80t per scute.

Leatherbacks are caught occasionally outside the reef; nesting not known. Flatback - not many seen, only outside the reefs.

Not seen with eggs inside. Ridley similarly scarce, only outside the reef, and not plentiful.

Information about incidental catches in prawl trawlers in the Gulf of Papua. Informant: Dave Gwyther (prawn biologist at Kanudi):

Chelonia depressa: both about 2 feet long

14/3/78 144°12'E 08°15'S Dead (frozen, but lost).

20/3/78 145°42'E 08°10'S Alive (returned to sea).

Lepidochelys olivacea:

9/3/78 145°24'E 08°04'S Alive (returned to sea).

24/6/78 145°18'E 07°58'S Male (returned alive).

Freshly scooped-out adult shell trawled up from bottom.

Dimensions:

straight length 66.2 cm.

straight width 59.4 cm.

Curved length 69.5 cm.

Curved width 69.0 cm.

Gaile Village. (East of Port Moresby)

Informant: Kavo Hota (about 70 years old).

Some confusion about names, but vernacular names probably:

Hawksbill : era

Leatherback: goli (not eaten)

} Lay eggs in water?!

Green : kenna (female; 300 eggs inside and laid)

: veu (male; 4 to 6 men to lift up)



Has not seen ridley, loggerhead or flatback.

Greens nest on a nearby beach around Easter time (April).

Caught while mating in April, when they do not flee when approached.

Era : 150 eggs

Kenna : 300 eggs

Do not catch many nowadays. Formerly caught plenty - 40 or 50 in a fortnight. Used 4 canoes slung together, with 10 or 20 men using a net. Would see turtles floating on the water and would chase them into the nets.

Today they use outboard motors and spears. Catch 20-50 turtles per month; some they eat, but mostly taken to Koki market; but only once or twice per year. Out of 20 turtles caught, 2 may be eaten locally and 18 taken to market. K20-K30 for a green, K10-K12 for a hawksbill. Meat sold in pieces. Entire hawksbill shells may be sold in Koki to Europeans.

K10 -whole shell of green or hawksbill. K1 -single hawksbill scute. Mostly greens are caught - only 1 or 2 hawksbills out of 20 turtles caught, sometimes none. Have seen leathery swimming in deep sea occasionally - early morning or late afternoon.

Hawksbill seen under coral ledges - thinks they lay eggs there because they do not see them on the beach (but 2 minutes later he said hawksbills are sometimes seen on the beach). Nesting greens are seen occasionally, and may be killed perhaps once a year. In about 1942, informant saw a hawksbill laying eggs on Idihi Island off Boera (Idia?). Doesn't find any nests on the beach nowadays, and only look for them at sea once or twice a year. Hunt for them off Kairuku (Yule Island) and at Hula. Also off Galley Reach. Don't find them nearby anymore, but saw plenty when he was young.

Parebada Village. (East of Moresby)

Informant : Tau Vaiburi

Vernacular names:

Hawksbill : era

Leatherback : guiguina

Flatback : goi

Turtles : matabudi (general name for)

Green : kennagarogaro (female)

Green : usiwiti (male)

Green and hawksbill are the ones usually found. Leatherback and flatback seen in deep water - have not seen them nesting. Do not see ridleys and loggerheads.

Both hawksbill and green nest on Idihi Island (not on Bava) in March and April. Also on Hoidana Island but not on the mainland. People from Parebada sometimes go to Hoidana and Idihi to collect eggs - always collect one or two nests in March and April. Used to get nesting turtles. Get turtles occasionally when out at sea fishing. Both species considered good eating. Free distribution of meat to relatives and villagers. Turtles were formerly actively hunted, but no longer.

Hawksbill shell was formerly used for necklaces etc. We saw 2 large pieces of necklace, 10 to 20 years old, of the type formerly used as money for bride price. Don't sell turtle meat in Koki any more, or make tortoiseshell items. Used to use whole turtles for bride price; may still be used if available, but not essential. Used to use 6" to 8" mesh nets to catch turtles, but no longer. Last turtle in village was eaten around May-July; caught while fishing. Don't know if the turtles are disappearing because do not hunt them. In former times, 10-20 turtles could be caught (according to the number of nets set); calm weather only, perhaps once a year. Nets were set behind Hoidara Island, on the reef; have not fished towards Manu Manu, Galley Reach so populations there unknown.

Poachers came across from Daugo Island (Hula people) to get turtles and fish, every day. Something should be done to stop this, informant believes.

Tambus. When hunting for turtles, they would sleep in a different room from their wives and children for three nights. This tambu stopped after the war and the nets were not used any more - rotted away in storage. Made out of bark fibers. Nowadays they use store-bought nets.

Haiari Village.

Informant: Eabe Duru

## Vernacular names:

Small Green : hapapa

Large Green : rakekom

Small Hawksbill: hara

Leatherback : epapo

Used to get them while nesting (informant recalls 5 occasions). Now seen in water but not specifically hunted. Has seen leatherback at sea. Eggs within the body are yellow. A leatherback was washed or thrown up by the sea years ago; did not nest. Leatherbacks not known to nest in the area. Have not seen flatbacks, but has heard talk of turtles that may have been depressa (or Pelochelys?) that nested in their father's day. Report also having seen a turtle like a big-headed rakekom in the sea. Only one turtle caught this year (about August); don't fish much or look for the turtles specifically. The one caught was taken on a line. It might have been a hawksbill. Don't use nets for turtles, and never use the shell, just throw it away. Ridley is called 'moro' - have seen it on the beach occasionally. (But informant not very reliable). Believe turtles nest only in March, but do not bother patrolling the beach even then. Don't make big nets any more for catching turtles, as was used in former times. No tambus regarding turtles. Do not sell the meat. Report the last turtle in the village (before this year) was in 1972. See them coming up to breathe when out in their boats, but don't believe there are lots out there.

Bert Counsel - interviewed by pilot while we were recording the above - said that turtles are not really part of the local diet, and the people do not have real sea-going boats because they can get all the fish they need in the nearby estuary. Also, Bert saw only 2 turtles during 8 months survey work from Kerema to Orokolo Bay.

Iokea Village.

Informant: Smith Marehari and several village men.

## Vernacular names:

Leatherback : wiriapo

Hawksbill : laheha

Green : hakeake

Only one or two turtle nestings annually are recorded. Don't eat leatherback - they do not like the look of it - but will eat green turtle meat. Will eat leatherback eggs - but probably not often (did not recognize that they were of different sizes). Also eat sosofa, a swamp tortoise, probably Emydura subglobosa, but have not seen the ridley, loggerhead or flatback.

Leatherbacks not seen at sea, only on the beach. Do not kill it, just take the eggs. Last year one was seen nesting at a village  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of here. Flesh is very greasy. About 6 years ago, people got sick from eating it, and now do not eat it any more. Informant has only seen one leatherback nesting. Greens and hawksbills will both nest here, but only rarely - "once a year". Calm weather, November to January. Leatherback thought to nest at the same time. If they find a turtle nest they will collect the eggs. They make tortoiseshell earrings. People do not hunt for turtles in the sea here, but Smith said that Hula people hunt for them off Marshall Lagoon with a net and special canoes. Hulan's are the main turtle hunters - will fish for turtles as far west as past Korema (local people here do not get angry at the Hulan's for poaching, because they do not do it too often).

Occasionally, people here will spear turtles or catch them on a line - each of two of the informants had caught one small one (green?) during the last year. Turtle kept on its back for up to a week, but people do not try and get turtles just for feasts. Don't use turtles for bride price, as they do at Daru.

Chiria Village, Yule Island.

First informant : Joseph Warupi. Do not hunt specially for turtles but occasionally catch them in the nets when fishing for long toms and crayfish. Also once in a while they spear turtles at night while night-hunting crayfish.

Two kinds, both found on the reef:

- aba : sounds like young hawksbill
- mata : sounds like big hawksbill
- bonu : collective name for turtles

Earrings and waistbands are made from tortoiseshell for singsing purposes. Do not do this any more. Shell is thrown away. Hula people occasionally come here and fish for turtles, but not too often or the people will get angry.

Hawksbill nests from October-December. Usually get back safely to the sea. They dig up nests they find by chance. Number of eggs variously estimated as 100-200 and 200-300. Perhaps 2 nests per year on the adjacent beach. Frequently see Aha while net fishing, sometimes mata. Both kinds eat seaweed and can bite if you make a mistake while handling them. No-one fishes every day, just when the family takes them. Do not use turtles for bride price. Mentioned Mr. Anderson of the Yule Lobster Co. as source of information for us. Eat turtle only once or twice per year. Some don't eat it, but only by individual choice.

Second informant: Julian Koae

Vernacular names:

- All turtles : bonu
- Hawksbill : aba (smaller, darker, thicker shell)
- Green : mata ('fine shell')

\*(when he eventually admitted there was more than one kind).

Do not know the difference between male and female. Has speared lots of mata but not aba. Does not eat them himself but given them away. Haven't seen nesting but others tell him that mata nests locally. Thinks there are plenty of turtles but not hunted much here.

Father Max Giano has seen turtle tracks on the beaches a few years ago.

Gregory Miria Kowo - Yule Lobster Enterprises.

Prawn trawlers sometimes catch turtles but eaten by crew and not brought to the lobster house.

Koki Market.

Manager: Noi Vagi. Turtle meat seen in the market about once a week during the season - i.e. in October to December. Two turtles might be sold in a morning. Big one cut up alive; small ones are often sold whole. K5-K6 for a small turtle. K50-K98 for a big one. K20-K30 for medium size. Mostly greens, some hawksbills. About 20-30 turtles per month during the season. Mostly brought in by Hula people; sometimes Tupuseleia. Caught in nets and by hand. Koki market only outlet for sea turtles in Port Moresby. Meat sold by piece (not weighed); 60t for a slab of meat, K1-20 with fat attached. Unlaid eggs from within also valued. Whole shells may sold; only Europeans buy them. K2-K4 in uncleaned condition. K10-K20 cleaned. Not often for sale.

Caught near the Daugo Island reefs, down to Kairuku and Yule Island; Hula people go there in motorized boats. Turtles brought in by about 20 Hula men in 2 or 3 canoes. Last week (Thursday) some were brought in. (Sue Rayner saw meat in Koki Market on 13 June 1978).

Gollin Kyokuyo (Niugini) Pty. Ltd.

Talked with operations manager, Shizuo (Sam) Sugita. Chief Officer (on board 1½ year prawn trawling in Gulf of Papua) gave the following information:

Normanby catch only 0-1 turtles in a month trawling. 3 or 4 kinds; one kind good to eat, others not. Average size about 60 cm. Largest about one meter. Two years ago, they caught 13 turtles south of Cape Blackwood (144°30'). Most of the turtles caught are dark green and not good to eat.