

SURVEY OF THE JAPANESE

HAWKSBILL INDUSTRY

(Project No. 3, Cost-\$4,000)

Japan is known to be the largest consumer nation of hawksbill turtles. Japanese tourists in Southeast Asia purchase significant numbers of whole stuffed specimens, and massive quantities of tortoiseshell (32,700 kg in 1976) are imported annually into Japan from numerous less developed countries around the world. The manufacturing of hawksbill scutes into jewelry and other items is traditionally centered in the Nagasaki Prefecture, with a comparably small number of companies being involved.

The desirability of stuffed hawksbills and tortoiseshell articles to the Japanese people appears to be ingrained into the culture, however there is an inadequate understanding of this phenomenon outside of Japan. Similarly, little is known about the manufacturing industry, including its sources of supply and distribution channels. In order to design appropriate conservation measures to combat this serious global drain on hawksbills, an investigative survey needs to be conducted in Japan to gather information on all aspects of the industry.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs

SURVEY OF SEA TURTLE FEEDING  
PASTURES IN THE KERMADEC ISLANDS  
(Project No. 9, Cost-\$3,000)

The Kermadec Islands of New Zealand consist of 12 subtropical oceanic islands located at approximately 30°00'S, 178°30'W. The only human habitation in this area is the staff of a small meteorological station. Four of the islands have been designated by New Zealand as "Reserves for the Preservation of Fauna and Flora", however only limited information is available on the natural history of the island group. This is particularly true with respect to the marine environment.

Although nesting is not known to take place, there are reports of aggregations of green turtles feeding in the nearshore waters. The origin of these turtles and the extent to which the area serves as developmental and resident feeding pastures is entirely unknown. A need exists to conduct a baseline survey of the area in order to determine what relationships and dependencies may exist with other green turtle aggregations in the Pacific.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs

DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN OCEANIC ISLANDS IN THE  
PACIFIC AS SANCTUARIES FOR SEA TURTLES

(Project No. 12, Cost-\$3,000)

Expanding human populations and improved means of transportation are presenting greater threats to remote oceanic islands in the Pacific that are ancestral breeding and feeding sites for sea turtles. Such locations of critical habitat need to be formally identified and evaluated for possible designation by the parent nations as sanctuaries for sea turtles. In addition to enhancing the conservation status of the stocks, such action could serve to attract public attention to the survival problems which internationally confront sea turtles.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs

PACIFIC ISLANDS' CONFERENCE ON THE  
MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH OF SEA TURTLES

(Project No. 17, Cost-\$5,000)

Pacific Island nations which comprise Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia still possess viable populations of sea turtles which are nutritionally and culturally important to the native people. Due to inadequate knowledge and cooperation in the management of these resources, it is doubtful that such sea turtles will be in existence for traditional usage by future generations. An urgent need exists to convene a working conference on the status, problems and possible solutions associated with sea turtle management and research in the Pacific Islands. The conference should be convened under the auspices of the South Pacific Commission, with invitations extended to a number of sea turtle specialists working both within and outside of the Pacific basin.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs

DETERMINATION OF THE NATURAL RATES  
OF GROWTH OF IMMATURE SEA TURTLES

(Project No. 19, Cost-dependent on  
exact details and area of work)

Knowledge of an animal's rate of growth and age at sexual maturity in the wild is basic to understanding the dynamics of a population. Such data are therefore absolutely essential to the development of sound, long range programs of wildlife management and conservation.

With respect to sea turtles, very little information exists on natural growth rates due mostly to the difficulties of capturing immature individuals in their marine environment for tagging purposes. Most research thus far conducted on sea turtles has been directed at sexually mature females in the terrestrial environment of their nesting beaches. A considerable need therefore exists to encourage and support research efforts that place emphasis on naturally occurring immature turtles in their nearshore feeding pastures. To the extent feasible, such work will have to encompass the different species as well as their genetically and geographically separated populations.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs

PAMPHLET PROMOTING PUBLIC AWARENESS  
OF THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF SEA TURTLES

(Project No. 30, Cost-\$4,000)

An increased public awareness of the conservation problems of sea turtles holds considerable potential for internationally stabilizing populations through improved management, legislation and funding of research programs. The public needs to be informed in a concise and stimulating, yet plainly written, fashion exactly what problems exist and what actions can be taken to improve the situation. This can be achieved in part by the preparation and widespread distribution of a short, inexpensive pamphlet which contains IUCN/WWF endorsement. The IUCN Principles and Recommendations on Sea Turtles should form the basis for preparing this pamphlet. Publication should take place in several languages, including English, Spanish, French, German and Japanese.

Submitted by G. H. Balazs