

among other things, selling a specially commissioned sea turtle necktie for Nfl. 100 (about US\$ 50) in Holland and, in February 1992, hosting a fund-raising dinner in Bonaire attended by wealthy and prominent persons, including the Prime Minister of The Netherlands and his wife (who is the patron of the Turtle Club). The dinner raised nearly US\$ 15,000.

Earlier this year the STCB hired a full-time sea turtle biologist to undertake the first thorough survey of Bonaire's sea turtles. The recently published Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for the Netherlands Antilles (Sybesma, 1992) provides an integrated blueprint for conservation action and has served as the basis for implementation of our project. The STCB invited Karen Eckert of WIDECAS to visit Bonaire last May to assist the Project Coordinator in developing a baseline study to include daily surveys of all potential nesting beaches, in-water surveys of potential foraging habitat, interviews with both active and retired turtle fishermen, establishment of a sightings network for divers, boaters and beach front residents, and an awareness campaign targeting school children, the dive tourism industry, law enforcement agencies (Park Rangers, Customs officers, Police) and the general public. The project will continue throughout the main nesting season (May-September), and may be extended. The community is very supportive of the project -- the Project Coordinator's housing, food, and transportation are all donated by local businesses -- and we look forward to substantive results by the end of the summer.

Sybesma, J. 1992. WIDECAS Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for the Netherlands Antilles (K. L. Eckert, Editor). CEP Technical Report No. 11. UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, Kingston, Jamaica. 63 p.

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ENDANGERED SEA TURTLES SOLD IN JAPANESE PET STORES

Endangered loggerhead and green sea turtles, whose trade is prohibited internationally by the Washington Treaty [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, "CITES"], are now being hatched and sold in Japanese pet shops. This was confirmed after investigation by a Chiba wildlife protection group which discovered that large numbers of eggs were missing from monitored nest sites. The Fisheries Department, considering this a case of poaching, is stepping up surveillance.

The environmental protection group, TRAFFIC(Japan), investigated 35 pet shops in the Kanto and Kansai areas between August and November last year. Twenty-five loggerhead turtles were found in a total of four shops, and 251 green turtles were found in ten different shops. Loggerhead turtles are known to come ashore to lay eggs along the Pacific coast of Japan, while green turtle nesting sites are in Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands. The price of the loggerheads ranged from 12,000 to 24,000 yen; green turtles varied from 13,000 to 29,000 yen. When questioned about the source of their supply, Okinawa was a frequent reply. The head of TRAFFIC(Japan), Mr. Tokunaga, said this may be a set answer, but it is not known whether it is true or not. As the frequently mentioned price of 24,000 yen would seem to indicate, the possibility of a supplier with a fixed price is not unlikely.

According to the Wildlife Protection Research Center, located in Kamogawa, Chiba, 48 sea turtles came ashore to lay eggs on the Boso Peninsula, from Kujukuri on the Pacific side to Futtsu on the Tokyo Bay side. After monitoring the nesting sites and those that safely hatched

and returned to the sea, two were accounted for while the eggs of 44 nests had completely disappeared and the remainder were destroyed during the construction of sea walls. A spokesman for the above-mentioned group, Mr. Shimada, claims that four people were observed last August digging up eggs that had been laid on Maruyama beach. It was thought that they were sold to restaurants, but it is possible that they were bought by pet shops.

The Fisheries Department says the sale of these protected turtles can be seen as nothing less than poaching. Beginning last year, surveillance was increased in Shizuoka, Kagoshima, and other hatching areas. Steps are being taken to increase patrols of the Chiba coast. Although protected by the Washington Treaty, at this time there is no Japanese law forbidding the trade of these endangered animals within Japan. Source: *Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper, 16 January 1993; distributed (and presumably translated) by the "Sea Turtle Conservation Center, South Chiba"; contributed by George Balazs (U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service).

TRINIDAD TURTLE HONORED ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Susan Lakhan of Nature Seekers Incorporated (NSI), a group which patrols Matura Beach on the east coast of Trinidad, West Indies, to protect endangered leatherback sea turtles, was inducted into the United Nations Environment Programme's "Global 500 Roll of Honour" on 5 June 1993 in Beijing, China. Ms. Lakhan was recognized for her "outstanding work" in the field of conservation, work that involves all-night seasonal surveillance of the nesting beach and not uncommonly brings her and her group threats of personal violence from potential poachers. Data collected by the Government of Trinidad suggest that 50-75 leatherbacks were killed each year in the 1980's (many for only a few pounds of shoulder meat) -- a number likely to represent a majority of the females nesting. We invited Ms. Lakhan to provide the MTN with a brief overview of her work. -- KLE/SAE, *Editors*

Our group was formed in 1990 as a result of the extensive slaughtering of the leatherback turtle at one of this species' most important nesting beaches in the Western Atlantic region, Matura Beach. The aim of our group is to promote appreciation and awareness of the natural resources within the community, as well as to promote total education in environmental conservation and to seek opportunities for development in environmental education. Before our group was formed, Wildlife Section staff (Forestry Division, Government of Trinidad and Tobago) saw the need to incorporate the villagers in conservation decisions following the designation of Matura Beach as a "prohibited area". As a direct result, an introductory training programme was formally conducted by the Wildlife Section in tour guiding which consisted of several field trips as well as classroom instruction. Nature Seekers Incorporated was born.

Since that time, we have been struggling towards making a household name for ourselves. We approached several agencies and private businesses for donations since most members of our group are unemployed. Many times we were turned down, but Aleong and Agostini Advertising Agency, AMOCO, National Petroleum Ltd., and Shell Chemical Services Ltd. came to our aid with tremendously important support. They assisted us with a logo, stationery, jerseys, torch lights, and batteries. They also promoted some of the group's activities. Their support has helped us accomplish a lot. We also use eco-tourism (guiding a maximum of 100 paying visitors to the beach each night to witness the egg-laying process) to promote conservation of our sea turtle resource, provide training for self-employment for our young people, and enhance community development. Our success has given impetus to a "sister project" at Fishing Pond Beach to the south, historically the centre of leatherback slaughter.