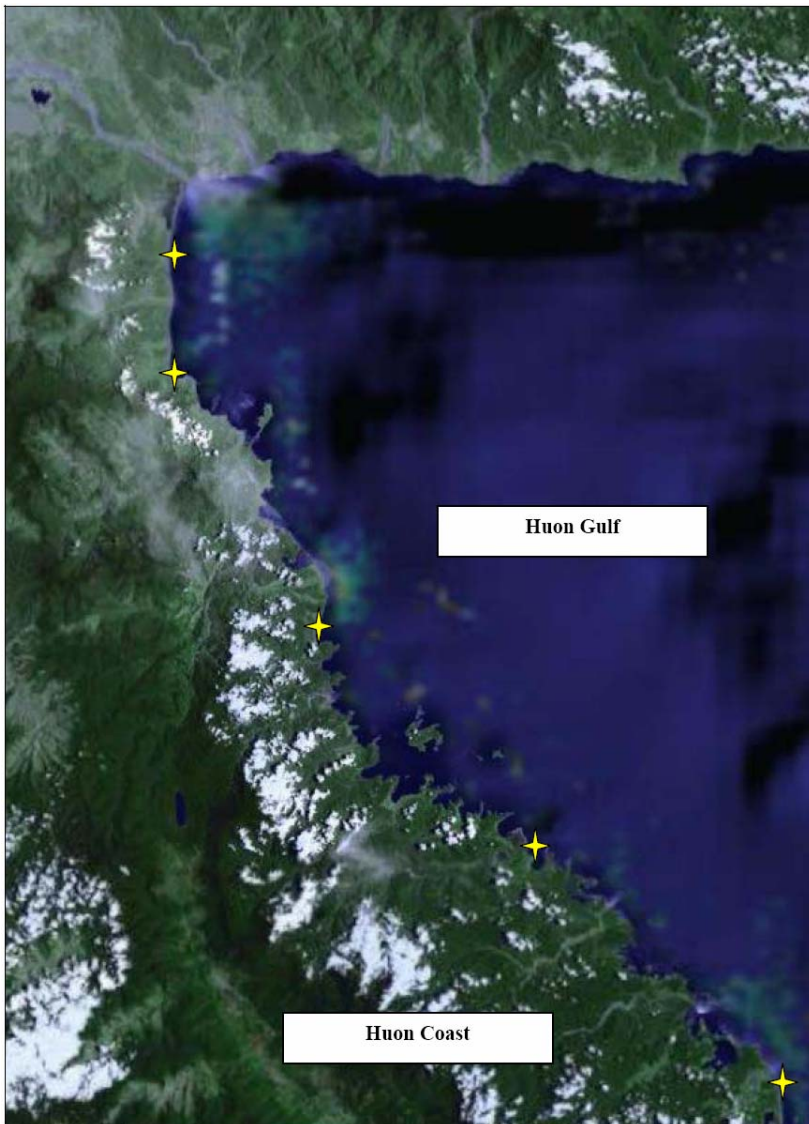


December 1, 2006



Huon Coast Leatherback Turtle Conservation Project

Where are we working?



Where is the HCLTCP Office?

The HCLTCP has established a newly renovated office at the Old Lae Yacht Club, Voca Point.

Come and see us

Important Events

- Christmas, December 2006
- Documentary filming of the leatherback turtle program at Busama, January, 2007
- Aerial surveys of nesting beaches, January 2007
- January–April 2007 intensive nest protection and hatchling studies implemented



- Field season ends April 2007



Comic Book

Come back Leatherback is the first comic produced by the HCLTCP.

Come back leatherback is a story of Tuki, a simple village boy and his struggle to educate villagers on the need to conserve turtle eggs on the beach to ensure future mothers returning to the same beach to nest.

"When you grow old and want a beach to nest on" Tuki said to the baby turtle, "come back here, I'll be waiting for you."

The HCLTCP would like to see these media used by: School teachers and children, Government fisheries and conservation officers, Non-governmental Organisations, Community-based Organisations, and other community groups.

The Morobe Agricultural Show

During the Morobe Agricultural Show (4th-5th November), the HCLTCP shared a stall with the Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Program and the National Fisheries Authority.

The HCLTCP produced a display and provided copies of the newsletter and t-shirts to the general public.

This event helped raise awareness amongst the general public on the good work and commitment that your communities are doing along the Huon Coast to protect, conserve and recover leatherback turtles.



John and Barry man the HCLTCP display



Year of the Sea Turtle Launch



The **Year of the Sea Turtle** launch was held at the Coronation College in Lae on the 13th November. This event was supported by World Wide Fund for Nature and the PNG Department of Environment and Conservation.. Community groups from Labu Tale, Busama and Lababia.



Dance group from Labu Tale



Dance group from Lababia

First Nest at Busama

The first leatherback turtle nest recorded on the monitoring beaches at Busama was near Maus Budu on the 7th November. This female was possibly a first time visitor as she had not been tagged before. Her back right flipper was considerably shorter than the other, suggesting a prior attack by a shark.



Team leader Sam Sapa with beach monitor/rangers and local residents

Pastor leaves Kobo

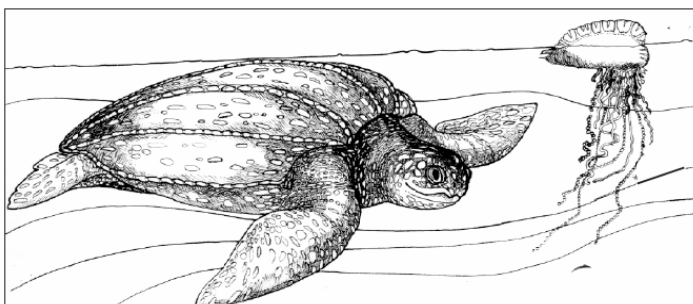
The Pastor for Kobo and his family left Kobo on the 11th November with assistance from the HCLTCP. Before leaving the friendly Pastor provided his blessings and support for Kobo and the other Huon Coast villages involved in monitoring and protecting leatherback turtle nesting beaches.



Councillor Baruga and former Kobo Pastor

Leatherback Turtle Ecology

- Size:** Adults grow up to 2.5 m carapace length
- Weight:** Up to a ton but more typically about 300-500kg
- Age to sexual maturity:** 12-15 years (nesting females are about 1.6 m)
- Life expectancy:** 35-40 years
- Nesting:** 2-4 years
- Nests:** Average of 4 clutches of eggs per season
- Eggs:** 85-95 eggs per nest
- Incubation:** 55-60 days for eggs to develop and hatchlings to emerge
- Nesting Season:** October and February, with low level nesting at other times
- Diet:** Mainly jellyfish



Leatherback turtle catching jellyfish

Conservation Status

- Status:** Critically endangered in the Pacific ocean.
- In PNG, the leatherback turtle is a **Protected Species** under the 1976 *Fauna (Protection and Control) Act*, which stipulates that any person who knowingly buys, sells, offers or consigns for sale, or has in possession or control of a protected animal is guilty of an offence and the penalty is K 500. Any person who takes (kills) a protected animal, is in contravention of a condition of a permit is guilty of an offence and the penalty is K 40 per animal.
- Population Trends:** There has been a 95% reduction in the number of nesting leatherbacks in the Pacific Ocean since 1980.
- Threats:** By-catch in pelagic and coastal longline fisheries. Harvesting of eggs. Loss of nesting habitat. Harvest of adult turtles.



Leatherback turtle caught by a fishing boat

For Additional Information



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The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is one of eight Councils in the United States established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. This Council oversees the nation's fisheries in U.S. Federal waters of the Pacific Islands Region. Management objectives are promote "best practice" and environmentally responsible fisheries.

WPRFMC Supported Turtle Projects

Nesting Beaches:

- Warmon beach, Vogelkop Coast, Papua, Indonesia
- Huon Coast, Papua New Guinea
- Japan - loggerhead turtle beach management

Foraging Habitats:

- ProCaguama - Baja California, Mexico
- Kei Islands, Western Papua, Indonesia
- Latin America - Longline fishery mitigation

Remember the Grids

For the HCLTCP to be successful, we need to ensure all hatchlings are entering the sea, this is the only way we will have adult females returning to lay eggs in future years.

We need to protect nests from egg predation (dogs and pigs) and poaching (humans)!!



Turtle Tags

We want to hear from you

If you have any stories or experiences about the leatherback turtle program that you would like to share, write down some words and pass to John or Barry on their weekly supply runs for inclusion in the next edition . . .



If you find any metal tags, from a leatherback, green or hawks-bill turtle, please give the tag number to either Levi, John or Barry.