

## Project Update: October 2021

During the research selected sites in Nias were visited. Fishermen, traders, craftsmen and other members of the community were asked about the sea turtle habitat, their use and trade. The following sites were visited: Gunung Sitoli, Olora, Gamo, Teluk Dalam (Sorake, Bawamataluo), Lahewa, Nalua, Sifahandro and Afulu.

The main centre of the tortoiseshell trade is the town of Gunung Sitoli, specifically Jalan Sirao street. Tortoiseshell products are sold in souvenir shops, shops with traditional clothes, and a goldsmith's shop. All products are freely displayed and offered to all incoming customers as the best and most original souvenir from Nias, which cannot be bought anywhere else. The table below shows the list of products and their prices at the time of the research.

- bracelet: 3,5 - 14 USD (50 000 - 200 000 IDR)
- ring: 1,5 - 2,5 USD (20 000 - 35 000 IDR)
- guitar pick: 1,5 USD (20 000 IDR)
- earrings: 2,5 USD (35 000 IDR)
- brooch: 1,5 USD (20 000 IDR)
- key ring: 2 - 2,5 USD (20 000 - 35 000 IDR)
- watch strap: 70 USD (1 000 000 IDR)
- hair clip: 14 USD (200 000 IDR)
- fan: 92 - 177 USD (1 300 000 - 2 500 000 IDR)
- belt: 50 USD (700 000 IDR)
- comb: 10 USD (150 000 IDR)



In the small town of Olora (about 20 km from Gunung Sitoli) is a workshop where craftsmen manufacture tortoiseshell products for souvenir shops in Gunung Sitoli. The workshop is one of the largest in Nias, craftsmen get the tortoiseshell mainly from fishermen from the nearby Tello archipelago, but also from local fishermen. Another place to process and sell tortoiseshell is Teluk Dalam, there are several smaller craftsmen who also use tortoiseshell from Tello. In Teluk Dalam, stuffed turtles were also sold in shops at the time of the research.



Due to the fact that Nias has a strong Christian community, there is also a demand for turtle meat. Turtles are often caught as a by-catch, during the nesting season they are then caught directly on the beach. Especially, the Ladara-Sifahandro-Afulu area, where green, leatherback, and rarely also hawksbill turtles lay eggs on beaches, there is a large occurrence of turtle and egg poaching during the nesting season. The female turtles are then sold for 70-350 USD / individual (1,000,000 - 5,000,000 IDR / piece), which is a significant source of income for local fishermen and poachers (several times greater than the normal monthly income). The trade is hidden, and turtle meat is not usually offered on the markets.

During the research on Nias island, questionnaires with 27 respondents and four interviews were completed. Information on trade routes and its operation was also obtained. Further steps in the protection of sea turtles on Nias are planned. In 2022, the Liberec Zoo will continue its activities and research in the field on Tello archipelago to obtain more detailed information on the operation of the tortoiseshell trade. This information will be essential for the implementation of conservation measures.



