

## **Project Update: July 2023**

The administration of the research permit extension was slightly delayed, and the fieldwork resumed in May 2023. In the meantime, the research team worked on selecting students from Universitas Syiah Kuala to participate in fieldwork and networking. A total of five students were selected. All selected students were female as we wanted to promote gender equality and empowerment.

In May 2023, we visited Bangkaru Island with two students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine to continue tissue sampling. The field team also consisted of the project leader, a field assistant and a local government representative from the Nature Conservation Department (BKSDA). We followed the methodology described in the project proposal. In addition, we had the opportunity to deploy two satellite tags on green turtles provided by the Brno Zoo.

In June 2023, we focused on networking. For example, at the beginning of June, two members of the team (Adela, Fadli) attended the Marine Turtle Genetics Training in Manila (Institute of Biology, UP-Dilliman) organised by the Asia-Pacific Marine Turtle Genetic Working Group. The team (Adela, Awaluddin, Teuku Reza) also attended the Indonesian Sea Turtle Symposium in Jakarta. Both venues gave us the opportunity to meet other people working with sea turtles in the region and to share experiences and expertise.

During the first half of July 2023, we continued to collect genetic samples in the field. The research team visited Simeulue with the aim of continuing to Salaut Besar Island, an important nesting site for green and leatherback turtles in Sumatra. In Simeulue, the research team met with representatives from Ecosystem Impact Foundation and Turtle Foundation, who run a sea turtle conservation programme on the island. The team also met with government officials from the Environment Agency (Dinas Lingkungan Hidup) and presented the research. The research team (the project leader, the field assistant and two students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universitas Syiah Kuala) together with representatives from both NGOs travelled to Salaut Besar Island. During the stay, 23 samples of green turtles were collected.

The planned workshop at Universitas Syiah Kuala has been postponed to August 2023. There were two factors that led to the rescheduling. Firstly, the new semester will start in mid-August, so new students will be able to attend the workshop and possibly choose sea turtle conservation and research as a major. Secondly, most of the fieldwork will have been completed by August, so the students who participated in the fieldwork will have the opportunity to prepare presentations about the activities they conducted and present them to their classmates, and possibly inspire others to get involved in sea turtle activities.

We would like to thank all Indonesian institutions and organisations who helped us during our research permit application process, and provided us a highly valuable support, and professional and friendly service. Further, we would like to offer our thanks to The Rufford Foundation and other partners who support our conservation and research activities. Without this support we would not be able to work on sea turtle conservation in Sumatra.



Adela disinfecting the skin for sample collection.



Students Sabrina and Nia collecting samples from a green turtle.



Students Sabrina and Nia during morning patrol in Bangkaru island.



Adela and Fadli in lab practicing preparation of samples for DNA extraction during the workshop in Manila.



Research team with rangers from Salaut Besar Island in Simeulue.



Teuku Reza, Adela and Awaluddin at Indonesia Sea Turtle Symposium in Jakarta.