

Project Update: October 2023

We continued with genetic sampling in our research sites. Firstly, we visited MPA Pieh and collected genetic samples from green turtles. We also deployed two satellite tags on the nesting females to monitor their movement patterns. Thanks to this we will have genetic data from west Sumatra and telemetry data which will together help in further conservation planning and provide a better understanding of sea turtle ecology in the region. In fieldwork in TWP Pieh, there was one selected student joining the project team, similar to previous field trips. Our team also visited again Bangkaru island where the team continued with the genetic sampling.

As for the genetic sampling, we already collected sufficient samples for planned genetic analyses in the most important nesting sites in western Sumatra (Bangkaru, Selaut Besar, TWP Pieh). All samples are already in the laboratory and the extraction and PCR will start soon. We have not visited yet two sites (Simuk, Anambas), but these sites will be visited in the first quarter of 2024 when the new nesting season starts.

An important part of our project is networking and collaborating with other organisations and institutions that work in sea turtle conservation in the region. Moreover, the Indonesian Ministry of Marine and Fisheries has developed a new National Action Plan for sea turtle conservation. Our team members are members of several working groups (Indonesia Sea Turtle Working Group, Sea Turtle Forum in Aceh) and regularly attend online and in-person meetings.

Overall, the collection of genetic samples continues well and as planned, despite the delay caused by the time-consuming permitting process. All four deployed satellite tags are transmitting information about turtles' movement patterns and will provide highly valuable data. The students from Universitas Syiah Kuala are joining all field trips which is another important element of the project. Unfortunately, we were not able to conduct the sea turtle workshops yet. For the upcoming weeks, we will be working on extending the research permit and will start preparing for fieldwork in 2024. Also, in the first quarter of 2024, we will organise the postponed sea turtle workshops in Banda Aceh and Padang.

We would like to thank all Indonesian institutions and organisations for their help and collaboration during our research permit application process, and project's implementation. Further, we would like to offer our thanks to The Rufford Foundation and other partners who support our conservation and research activities.



Meeting in Banda Aceh with staff from Universitas Syiah Kuala and local Agency of Marine Affairs.



Part of the samples collected in TWP Pieh.



Research team with local conservation team in TWP Pieh.



Sampled green turtle with satellite tag.