

Presenting Author: Ricardo F. Tapilatu
E-mail: rf.tapilatu@unipa.ac.id and rftapilatu@yahoo.com
Fax # : + 62 986 211 455
Date: October 19, 2015

**Revitalizing Sea Turtle Conservation in North of Waigeo Island, Raja Ampat
Papua Barat Province - INDONESIA**

Ricardo F. Tapilatu^{1,2)}, and Ferdiel Ballamu³⁾

¹Marine Laboratory and Department, The University of Papua (UNIPA) Manokwari (98314),
Papua Barat Province – Indonesia

²Research Center for Pacific Marine Resources – The University of Papua Manokwari
(98314), Papua Barat Province – Indonesia

³Papua Sea Turtle Foundation. Jl. Wiku No. 128 Sorong (98413), Papua Barat Province –
Indonesia

Abstract

Wareba and a few other beaches in the north of Waigeo Island, Raja Ampat are alternative nesting beaches for western Pacific leatherbacks during the boreal summer season (April-September). The beach complex is also important for olive ridley and green turtles. Over the years, the Yambekaki community has observed a decrease in nesting and sighting of turtles, likely caused by historic harvesting of turtles and their eggs. A sea turtle monitoring program was revitalized in 2013 after sporadic efforts between 2005 and 2012. Wareba and surrounding beaches were selected because there was a local initiative to protect sea turtles, which was supported by the Raja Ampat District government. To increase awareness of local stakeholders on sea turtle biology, conservation, and cultural importance, we engaged members and leaders of the Yambekaki community and government officials in focus group discussions. We formed sea turtle monitoring teams composed of community members. The teams were trained on standardized methods to document sea turtle nesting, monitor nest, and evaluate hatching success. We assigned different roles to each team member to develop expertise and minimize error in data recordings, and developed a simple database for data entry. The monitoring team detected 15 leatherback nests in 2013 and 19 nests in 2014, which were 3.7% and 4.2% of the total number of nests laid in Jamursba Medi, an index beach located in the north coast of the Bird's Head peninsula, during the two years. The average hatching success was 54±12% in 2013, and 67±9.2% in 2014. In general, the monitoring program enhanced hatchling production and overall reproductive success of all nesting turtles in those years. The Yambekaki elders have played a critical role in increasing the community's commitment to sea turtle conservation. Now, the community is committed to continue the sea turtle monitoring and conservation program in Wareba and surrounding beaches. The revitalization served as a good model to initiate and develop sea turtle monitoring program in other non-index beaches scattered

across the Bird's Head peninsula. We believe extending protection to non-index beaches will solidify the recovery of leatherbacks in western Pacific.

We thank the Rufford Small Grant (RSG), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, and International Sea Turtle Society for generously supporting our conservation effort in Raja Ampat and our participation in the Symposium.

- Session: Conservation and Monitoring
- Prefer poster
- No equipment needed