



Turtle Foundation

Foundation for the Protection of Sea Turtles and their habitats

Newsletter November/December 2019

Dear friends and supporters of Turtle Foundation,

Again and again we are painfully reminded that the excessive use of fossil energy sources not only damages our climate, but also has other harmful effects on our ecosystems. Since September of this year, for example, an approximately 2,000 kilometre long stretch of Brazilian coastline has been hit by a mysterious oil spill, the source of which is still unknown. Several 1,000 tons of viscous heavy oil were washed up – along with numerous dead sea birds, sea turtles, and dolphins. Our colleagues from the Brazilian sea turtle conservation organisation Projeto TAMAR and many other helpers are still busy cleaning up oil-contaminated sea turtles and carrying thousands of hatchlings, born on the oil-contaminated beaches, over the oil mud into the open sea. Fortunately, we did not have to fight such catastrophes this year in our projects. Yet much has happened, and it is time for a short review of the year.

TURTLE FOUNDATION UK

The whole world is talking about Brexit, we are not: The international Turtle Foundation family has grown from Great Britain! On 12 October 2019, *Turtle Foundation UK* was officially founded in London. It is headed by the Foundation Board members Lisa Logan, John Logan, Prof. Dr. Otto Jockel, and Dr. Christophe Eizaguirre. Turtle Foundation now consists of seven national organisations in Germany, Switzerland, USA, Cape Verde, Liechtenstein, Indonesia, and now also Great Britain, plus the friends association *Turtle Foundation Friends e.V.* in Germany.

ANTI TURTLE SHELL CAMPAIGN

On Bali, Indonesia, our sister organisation *Yayasan Penyu Indonesia* (YPI, Turtle Foundation Indonesia) launched a nationwide awareness campaign this year against the illegal but in many places still common trade in turtle shell. Turtle shell is used to make products such as jewellery, for which many of the endangered hawksbill turtles still have to give their lives. The campaign is accompanied by our mascot „Kimi“. At the event “*Wonderful Nias Expo 2019*” on the Island of Nias, to which the Indonesian Ministry for Maritime Affairs invited us in September, Kimi was present right at the fingertips of the visitors. Nias is a focal point of the trade with turtle shell products in Indonesia, to which we pay special attention.

RANGER STATION ON BELAMBANGAN

At the beginning of this year we established a new protection project on the Indonesian Derawan island Belambangan, the last of the larger nesting island of this archipelago that was unprotected so far. On all coral

islands of the archipelago together nests the world’s eighth largest population of the green sea turtle. Since our arrival we counted more than 2,000 nests – more than we had expected on the small island during this period. Without our intervention, most of them would probably have been plundered again by illegal egg collectors as in previous years. Our rangers, who now prevent egg collection, are currently living in a temporary camp on the island; soon we will start to build a solid, but environmentally friendly accommodation out of sustainable building materials on the otherwise uninhabited island.



Kimi at the Wonderful Nias Expo 2019



The project island of Belambangan east of Borneo

LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLES

The leatherback turtle is the largest sea turtle in the world, but its Indian Ocean subpopulation is acutely threatened with extinction. The main causes are the hunt for the adult animals and the collection of eggs. On the Indonesian island of Sipora, in autumn 2017 we discovered a so far not publicly known small leatherback turtle nesting population. By last October, the third nesting season for our protection project there has begun. Local rangers guard the nesting animals and secure the valuable clutches in a fenced hatchery. Since the start of the project, we have been able to save an estimated 15 to 20 leatherback turtle females from the knives of the poachers and released over 4,500 young animals into the sea. Even if that doesn't seem like much, especially if compared to the numbers in our other projects, every single saved individual counts for these rare animals.



Project coordinator Zai Meriussoni with leatherback turtle at night

SEASON'S END ON BOA VISTA

While the leatherback turtles on Sipora opened their nesting season, it ended for the loggerhead turtles on Boavista, Cape Verde. Since the beginning of June, our Cape Verdean rangers, along with volunteers from

all over the world, have been protecting the nesting females from poachers every night. In the meantime, the beach camps have been dismantled, only a small team still takes care of the hatching young animals in the hatcheries. We are celebrating great successes in the further containment of poaching throughout Boavista, even in the remaining poaching hotspots in the east of the island. During the last two years poaching was curbed by more than 90%! Both our night vision drone project and our community work contributed to this success. We were especially happy about the arrival of our species protection dogs Karetta and Kelo, who after almost two years of training in Switzerland, started their service for the protection of the sea turtles on Boavista together with their dog handlers.



Conservation dogs and dog handlers during search training at the beach

TURTLE RAFFLE

We would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to our big **Turtle Raffle 2020**. The Turtle Raffle is an annual raffle for the endangered sea turtles, where you can win diving trips, diving equipment, and other great prizes donated by reputable companies. The draw for the 41 prizes, worth around € 31,000/ US\$ 34,000, will take place at the FESPO travel fair in Zurich on Sunday, 2 February 2020 at the booth of the diving tour operator WeDive. Until the raffle, on Facebook and Instagram we regularly present our prizes and sponsors. **All proceeds of the raffle will go to our conservation projects.** Further information and the online order form for the raffle tickets can be found on our homepage:

<https://www.turtle-foundation.org/en/turtle-raffle/>

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all our sponsors, friends and partners! Please continue to support us with your donation!

Your Turtle Foundation



Turtle Foundation

Registered Charity in Cape Verde, Germany, Indonesia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, UK, and USA

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