



# TURTLE FOUNDATION

20 years of worldwide engagement to save the sea turtles

## ✦ Newsletter December 2020

*Dear Friends and Supporters of Turtle Foundation,*

*„At least nature is benefiting from the Corona crisis“. Many nature lovers try to console themselves with this sigh of relief about the hard times of the pandemic. This has indeed had a noticeable impact on the environment. Less air pollution and energy consumption, wildlife roaming the suburbs, clear water in the canals of Venice. It has even pushed back by three weeks the so-called „Earth Overshoot Day,“ after which we have used up all of the earth's sustainably usable resources in a year. There is also good news for sea turtles. On many nesting beaches heavily used by tourists, such as in Florida, the decline in human activity has led to a significant increase in nesting success. But it's not quite that simple after all. In Costa Rica, for example, the lack of tourists on the beaches led to a significant increase in turtle poaching. The complexity of the problem is also apparent at the global level: packaging waste is on the rise, rainforests are increasingly being cleared, and there are calls to relax environmental standards in order to stimulate the damaged economy. Even if some ecological degradation is temporarily reduced, humanity continues to live beyond its means and natural resources. We should now seize the opportunity to consider how we can consistently link post-pandemic economic recovery to sustainability.*

*As usual at this time of year, we would like to offer a brief review of our projects in this challenging twentieth year since the inception of Turtle Foundation.*

### PROJECT BELAMBANGAN AND SAMBIT

The Derawan islands off East Borneo are the most important nesting rookery for the green sea turtle in Indonesia. It was there on Sangalaki island, where the story of Turtle Foundation began in 2000 and the story of the protection of the turtles, whose eggs had previously been almost completely collected for human consumption. After initiating the protection of other islands, two islands with high nesting populations remained that were completely unprotected due to their remoteness: Belambangan and the lighthouse island Sambit. On Belambangan, we have had a permanent presence since early 2019 and are able to protect about 15–20% of the archipelago's nests from poachers here. In our efforts to expand our activities on Sambit, we have now achieved important partial successes this year. There are still some administrative and structural hurdles to overcome, but we are confident that we will be able to save 500–1,000 nests on Sambit annually from poachers in addition to the 3,000 nests on Belambangan.

### ANTI TURTLE SHELL CAMPAIGN

In order to mitigate the massive threat to hawksbill turtles from the illegal trade in tortoiseshell in Indonesia, we launched an integrated program last year to investigate the trade and educate the public. After securing funding, we started with great enthusiasm, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced some changes to the program, which are now proving beneficial. Our television and radio commercials featuring our mascot Kimi have already attracted an audience of millions. We assume that Kimi will make a big impression, especially on children, and that this will lead to a generation that can no longer imagine Kimi having to give his life for a bracelet.

### PROJECT WEST SUMATRA

The majestic leatherback turtle is distributed worldwide, but many populations are threatened with extinction. This is obviously also true for the small leatherback turtle population of the Northeast Indian Ocean. Its main nesting area is in the Indian archipela-

*Green sea turtle hatchling off East Borneo*





go of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, but significant portions of the population also nest in West Sumatra. To protect the Indonesian portion of this population, this year we partnered with the Indonesian conservation organisation Ecosystem Impact and began to survey all regular leatherback turtle nesting sites in West Sumatra for future protection. While during the last nesting season in our leatherback turtle conservation project on Sipora island unfortunately no nesting of leatherback turtles occurred, we learned in this way that leatherback turtles were still nesting elsewhere in the area, which gives us great hope for Sipora as well.



*Nesting leatherback turtle on Selaut Besar island off West Sumatra*

## NEW NESTING RECORD ON BOA VISTA

Reporting new record numbers of loggerhead turtle nesting activity in our conservation project on Boa Vista, Cape Verde, has almost become a habit in recent years. And so this nesting season also ended with a bang: we counted over 27,000 nests on the Turtle Foundation project beaches. This surpassed the massive record of 2018 (17,181 nests) with its tripling of the previous nest numbers by another third! Encouragingly, despite the many opportunities for turtle poaching, cases of poaching also remained at an all-time low. These are the fruits of the drone and conservation dog task force activity on the one hand, but also of successful collaboration with the other organizations and joint efforts in education and participatory community outreach.

### *Beach cleanup on Boa Vista as an initiative of Turtle Foundation and local communities.*



## NEW WEBSHOP

We have already reported that our popular Turtle Tombola will unfortunately have to be cancelled for 2020/2021 as a consequence of the pandemic. All the more we are happy that we can now offer another possibility to support us: A few weeks ago, we opened our new Turtle webshop! Here you can expect sustainable products in the Turtle Foundation look, such as our cozy hoodie, chic carry bags and the practical drinking bottle. Of course, all proceeds from the store will go to our projects. We look forward to your visit at: [www.turtle-foundation.org/en/shop/](http://www.turtle-foundation.org/en/shop/) Currently, we deliver to Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, and USA.

**We would like to thank all our supporters, friends and partners and ask you to continue to support us with your donation, a symbolic adoption, or your purchase in our webshop!**

*Your Turtle Foundation*

### TURTLE FOUNDATION

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