

TURTLE FOUNDATION INDONESIA

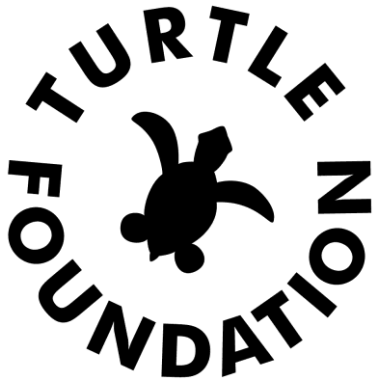
Monthly Report April 2015

Dear TF board and supporters,

how are you? I have good news ☺ It looks that finally we can see results of the rangers' hard work on the islands. Since 26 of March, when egg poachers stole 15 nests from hatchery, it has been a long time since they've come again. The rangers have been relocating all nests to beach forest around the island of Bilang-bilangan randomly but every time far away from all turtle tracks. **Egg poachers** came again 20 of April – that night they found only 2 nests which were not yet relocated. But 2 nests are too little. It is around 200 eggs = 1 200 000 IDR which is not enough to buy petrol for journey to Bilang-bilangan from any single nearest inhabited place. Unsatisfied egg poachers probably stayed in coral reef close to the island and they came again the 24th. But that day they were totally out of luck. We met them on the beach as they arrived. They ran away to their speedboat and left the island with not a single egg. Rangers stayed at beach in hiding place until morning and they saw that egg poachers came once again at 5am. Berly could not take photo of them because they were too far from the ranger's hiding place and he was waiting until they came closer but the egg poachers only checked the nearest place where a turtle lay eggs that night and when they realized that the eggs were relocated, they just left island with nothing. I hope they have already learned that they will not have luck on Bilang-bilangan and they will not come again. Please keep your fingers crossed.

Besides patrolling every day, the whole night, and morning and afternoon, we have been focusing on **cleaning the islands** and I am really happy with results. Islands are nearly clean and it is crazy big different from what we saw in February when we arrived here. **Volunteers** Alexandra Zdeňková and her boyfriend Thomas Kolman helped us with cleaning beaches of Mataha and Bilang-bilangan in April. Alexandra has already been a long time interested in turtles and she helped me a lot with project in Czech Republic. She is working as project manager in government education project founded from European Union. She has printed 700 education memory games for us in Indonesian, Czech and English language. She has also collected cuddly toy turtles for our education program in kindergartens. Alexandra organised education program about sea turtles in 28 schools which are part of her project in Czech Republic and she organised a photo exhibition last year in her town. I was really happy when she decided to come to visit our project and see the real situation in Indonesia.





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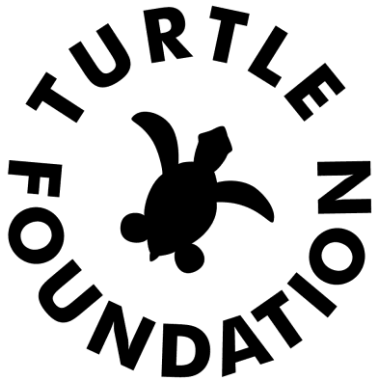
We were together **collecting garbage** (plastic, glass and cans) in Mataha and Bilang-bilangan also. Thomas helped the guys a lot with the saw. Thomas saws well so he together with guys cut **driftwood** into parts and cleaned massive logs from several sectors of each island. This is very important because massive logs block the adult turtles from reaching suitable nesting areas and prevent the newly hatched turtles from reaching the sea. This would be not possible if we didn't have the saw, so thank you for possibility to buy it.



I am very happy to see islands now because it is big step forward and a lot of work was done since February. With Alexandra and Thomas we have many ideas how to help project in future so I hope it will work and our plans will become reality.

Alexandra and Thomas are divers also so one of their plans is to **inform their diver friends** about turtles. I made a simple leaflet for them; maybe you can use it also so I add it to this e-mail. After our return from islands I accompany Alexandra and Thomas to **Derawan** for 3 days (27.-30.4). They wished to dive there and I wanted to bring our T-Shirts to participating vendors in Derawan and check compliance with our agreement not to sell turtle products. It was really hard for me to walk in Derawan and see how **people openly offered turtle shell products and stuffed hawksbill juveniles** in souvenir shops and by street vendors. I checked 11 shops and in 10 I found hawksbill products ☹





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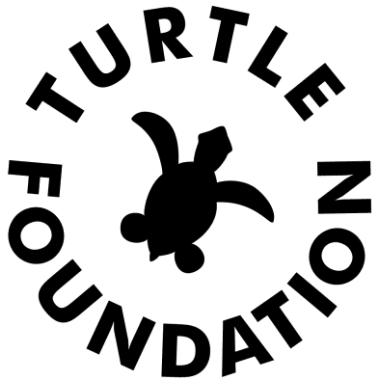
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Local people are hunting mature hawksbills for their shell. Their coveted tortoise shell is either peeled from still living animals in a very cruel manner, with animals slowly but surely dying, or juvenile animals are directly killed and stuffed to be sold as wall decoration. Local people cannot speak English, foreign tourists usually think that the product are from plastic because nobody can imagine that people will openly sell products from critically endangered species. To people who know, sellers are telling a lie. They tried to tell me that all products were made from naturally dead turtles...yes surely if you are snorkelling you need to have big luck to encounter a hawksbill turtle here but tens of them are drift by high tide to Derawan every week ☹️ They don't care that hawksbill turtles are protected by Indonesian and also international law. I was really sad to see this all.



People from Derawan are not open for changes and they don't like speaking about conservation. A lot of NGO had already problems with them and local government also don't know how address this problem. But closing your eyes and just not visiting the island will not help turtles here. Local people kill hawksbills for their shell, they eat green turtle eggs and meat and they still use dynamite fishing. It is really difficult to speak with them but our effort is extremely needed here. Since July 2014 Turtle Foundation has set up **cooperation here with one souvenir shop owner** and 2 street vendors. I have not met these two street vendors during my visit of Derawan but the souvenir shop was the only one place where turtle products were not offered. I am happy that this shop owner is cooperating with our agreement not to sell turtle products. He bought again T-Shirts printed with marine and turtle motifs from me and also jewellery from coconut shell which were made by Sablon from Maratua island. I hope we will find more interested vendors and shops and expand our programme to supply them with sustainable products in future. I also hope we will be able to organize handicraft workshop on Derawan soon.



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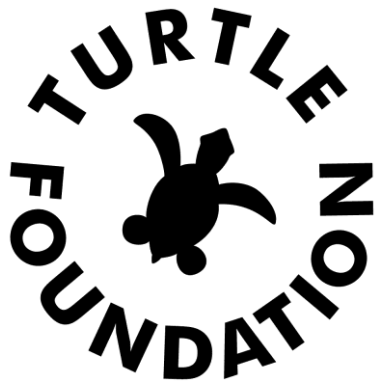


I think education is also really important here in Derawan island so I went to **kindergarten** and tried bring a short education program. Teachers were nice and they invited me to enter the class. Children played with cuddly toy turtles and I played memory game about turtles with them. It is full of photos about the turtle's life so children enjoyed the lesson. It was very nice and teachers invited me to come again but it was also very stressful to see that $\frac{3}{4}$ of children in class have bracelet made from hawksbills turtle shell ☹️ The last way how to reduce hunting of hawksbill turtles for their shell is inform tourist and induce them to not buy hawksbills products. It will be also important for our program in future I think. During my stay in Derawan I also visited Derawan dive resort and I induced dive instructor to kindly ask tourist to not buy hawksbills products. He was very friendly and he is ready to help us also with questionnaire study among recreational divers during our Hawksbill Turtles Research and Impact Mitigation Programme 2015.



Please keep your fingers crossed for us here because Mrs. Yunda from DKP (the government office which is responsible for islands) informed Berly that in the beginning of May she will organised the next meeting between Konservasi Biota Laut Berau, Yayasan Penyu Berau and WWF. We have no idea what the meeting will be about but we will do our best for keeping us working on the islands, protecting the turtles and their eggs.

Hana Svobodová



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