

From: itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com

To: mtsg-oceania-iucn@googlegroups.com

Subject: [mtsg-oceania-iucn] 12 healthiest sea turtle populations. SWOT Report 7.

Date: Fri, 6 May 2016 08:40:39 +0000

Hello MTSG Oceania Region- As you know tomorrow, May 6 USA date, rulemaking will formally go into effect changing green turtles from Threatened status to Endangered status under the USA Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the Regions designated DPS 7 Central West Pacific, and DPS9 Central South Pacific. The USA 'flag islands' within these two regions include American Samoa, Guam, CNMI, Wake, Howland, Baker, Jarvis, and Palmyra. There are those of us that feel this upgrade to Endangered status (in danger of going extinct in the foreseeable future) is not justified by available science information. There are also those that say it makes no difference, because the restrictions/protective measures for Endangered status and Threatened status under the USA Endangered Species Act are nearly the same. I am not one of those that holds this view because science-based soundness as to the degree of threat is a foundation to all conservation. As a well-respected colleague recently wrote to me about such decision making- "this is too much of a fundamental issue for conservationists to leave to emotion and political correctness."

Curiously, just a few years ago SWOT Report 7 (State of the World's Turtles) listed the West Central Pacific and South Central Pacific green turtles as being among the "12 healthiest sea turtle populations in the world." Please see the attached pdf and/or the link below to help formulate your own views. Sincerely, George Balazs

<http://seaturtlestatus.org/report/swot-report-vol-7>

--

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "mtsg-oceania-iucn" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to mtsg-oceania-iucn+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To post to this group, send email to mtsg-oceania-iucn@googlegroups.com.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.

THE **12** HEALTHIEST SEA TURTLE POPULATIONS

Green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*)



East Pacific Ocean

KEY NESTING SITES: GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS (ECUADOR) AND MEXICO

This population underwent a perilous decrease in numbers in past decades because of substantial turtle harvest for their meat and eggs throughout the region, but especially in Mexico. However, because stricter controls on trade of turtle products were enforced, green turtles have made a remarkable comeback in this region. Although still a fraction of their historic population size, green turtles in the East Pacific are no longer in danger of disappearing any time soon.



Southwest Atlantic Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: BRAZIL

Green turtles, like other sea turtle species in Brazil and the southwest Atlantic in general, are a conservation success story. Once depleted because of extensive consumption of eggs and meat, as well as accidental capture in fisheries, green turtles are on the rise in this region. Although coastal net bycatch is still a threat, collaborative conservation efforts throughout the region are ensuring a positive outlook for this population.



Southeast Indian Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: AUSTRALIA

Although they have not been monitored for long, these green turtles are abundant and fairly isolated. They nest along the rugged and remote coast of Western Australia; although consumption of eggs and turtles by humans poses a threat to them on beaches and in the water, the chances are good that these turtles will be around for a while.



South Central Pacific Ocean

KEY NESTING SITES: FRENCH POLYNESIA AND SEVERAL PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS

Although population trends are not well known, the population is not facing many serious threats. Future monitoring and conservation work will provide a better view of this population's status, but for now, things are bright for these Pacific Island green turtles.



West Central Pacific Ocean

KEY NESTING SITES: PALAU, GUAM, AND MICRONESIA

These green turtles are spread across this vast oceanic island region, with nesting sites dotting isolated beaches and remote coral atolls. But they also share islands with humans, and traditional cultures in this region value turtles, sometimes for consumption. At the moment, this population is healthy, but better assessments of their status will help future conservation efforts.

Hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)



Southeast Indian Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: AUSTRALIA

As for green turtles in this region, nesting in isolated places gives these hawksbills an advantage that allows them to thrive. Although monitoring has been occurring only in recent years, threats to this population appear mild, making its future bright.



Southwest Indian Ocean

KEY NESTING SITES: SEYCHELLES AND BRITISH AND FRENCH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Unlike their cousins in other parts of the world, these hawksbills benefit from solid long-term monitoring and good protection at major nesting sites and in their coral reef habitats. As with all hawksbills, exploitation of their shells for handicrafts and jewelry is a constant threat; although this population is historically depleted as a result, it is healthy and recovering at present.



Southwest Pacific Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: AUSTRALIA

Nesting sites for this population are confined to Australia, but hawksbills are thriving along the continent's shores and in its coral reefs. Exploitation of hawksbills for their shells remains a threat, and impacts from future climate changes might be problematic, but at present, these are healthy hawksbills.



Leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)



Northwest Atlantic Ocean

KEY NESTING SITES: TRINIDAD, GUYANA, FRENCH GUIANA, SURINAME, COSTA RICA, AND PANAMA

In contrast to their cousins on the other coast of the Americas, this leatherback population is huge and increasing nearly everywhere. With the exception of the declining nesting colony in Costa Rica and Panama, leatherbacks are swarming nesting beaches and feeding areas throughout the wider Caribbean and North Atlantic. Conservation efforts to maintain beach protection and to address significant bycatch issues are the keys to keeping these leatherbacks on this list.



Southeast Atlantic Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: GABON

Recent studies of the major nesting sites in Gabon have established this population as the biggest in the world for leatherbacks. Despite threats from bycatch and oil exploration in parts of their distribution, conservation efforts are under way to foster cooperative, international management in Gabon and neighboring countries to protect leatherbacks and other sea turtles in this region.

AT TOP: Green turtles haul ashore to bask on the remote coast of western Australia. The green turtle population in this relatively undeveloped region is thriving thanks to low levels of threat from human activities and strong protections by the Australian government. © KELLIE PENDOLEY



Loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*)



Northwest Indian Ocean

KEY NESTING SITE: OMAN

Despite being the largest loggerhead nesting population in the world, monitoring efforts have become consistent only recently, which means that we still know relatively little about this population. Threats from fisheries bycatch appear to be severe, but the sheer abundance of nesting loggerheads in this region seems to have the upper hand for now.

Olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)



East Pacific Ocean (arribada populations)

KEY NESTING SITES: MEXICO, NICARAGUA, AND COSTA RICA

Harvest for meat, eggs, and skin was rampant in the past and resulted in shocking declines in the seemingly endless abundance of olive ridleys in the East Pacific. Although some mass nesting sites have not recovered, others have held strong and remained incredibly abundant. The biggest rookery in the world hosts hundreds of thousands of nesting females each year! Serious threats still exist in this region, especially because of fisheries bycatch, but this population of sea turtles is presently the most abundant on the planet.