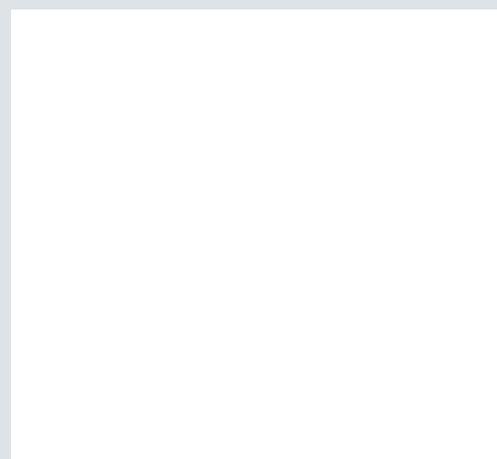


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awaiting image

## Marine Turtles Trade at Pangandaran, South Java

Pangandaran is a beach resort with a ~1000 ha nature reserve along the south coast of Java, Indonesia. According to staff at the entry posts, it receives almost a million, mainly domestic, visitors a year. Based on a visit in August 2004, Hilterman and Goverse (2005) reported that "...hundreds of stuffed sea turtles and bottles of turtle oil were being sold in souvenir shops...", including Olive Ridley Turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea*, Hawksbill Turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata*, Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas*, and possibly Loggerhead Turtles *Caretta caretta*. Previous surveys in Pangandaran found 100 Hawksbill, 37 Olive Ridley and six Green Turtles (Anon., 2005) and 14 Hawksbill, eight Olive Ridley and six Green Turtles for sale (Anon., 2010).

All species of marine turtle are globally threatened and included in Appendix I of CITES and Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). Marine turtles are protected by Indonesian law (*Law No. 5* of 1990 and amendment *PP No. 8* of 1999), and all trade is prohibited. The Penanjung Pangandaran nature reserve, which is classified as a protected area under the IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories under 1a Strict Nature Reserve, includes a 470 ha marine section in which no natural resource exploitation is allowed; there are two guard posts, staffed by officers of the Regional Office for Natural Resource Management, at either ends of the reserve.

From 13 to 15 April 2012, the author surveyed over 200 stalls and shops selling marine products in Pangandaran resort (7°41' S, 108°39' E). Carapace lengths of whole marine turtle specimens were measured or estimated. Vendors were interviewed in Bahasa Indonesia, the official language of Indonesia, about origins, turnover and prices (quoted in Indonesian rupiah and converted to US dollars in this report) of marine turtle products. No wildlife was purchased as part of this investigation.

The trade in marine turtles was concentrated on the southern end of the eastern beach (*pantai timur*), with seven stalls selling turtles near the offices of the nature reserve park management, and a further eight shops in the tourist market (*pasar parawisata*) on the north side, close to the main bus terminal (Fig. 1). This survey found stuffed specimens of nine Hawksbill, 12 Olive Ridley and 21 Green Turtles for sale, all whole. No Loggerhead Turtles were observed for sale. Green Turtle specimens ranged in length from 18 cm (priced at USD22) to 108 cm (USD220), the Hawksbill Turtles from between 30 to 35 cm (USD49) and 50 cm (USD82) and the largest Olive Ridelies were ~75 cm (price unknown). There was a significant positive relationship between carapace length and price (Fig. 2), with more or less USD1 added for every centimetre of increase in carapace length. The overall value of the stuffed marine turtles observed for sale was in the order of USD2000–2500. No turtle eggs or marine turtle derivatives (oil, meat, tortoiseshell or *bekko*) were observed for sale.

## NEWS



Fig. 1. A shop in Pangandaran's tourist market offering a wide range of marine products for sale, including stuffed Green Turtles (left) and an Olive Ridley (right).

The turtles were said to be caught locally and opportunistically, possibly as by-catch, by local fishermen. Vendors were generally aware that the turtles were a protected species but were open about providing details of the trade. Captured turtles were brought on shore and stuffed locally near Pangandaran. Apart from two adult Olive Ridley Turtles, which were in poor condition, all specimens on offer appeared to have been recently acquired, suggesting a high turnover. One vendor at the tourist market indicated that turnover of stuffed turtles was high and pointed at the large numbers of visitor/tourist coaches that were parked at the bus terminal adjacent to the market. Another vendor at the eastern beach also indicated a high turnover of marine turtle sales, stating that she regularly sold medium-sized, juvenile turtles.

Immediately following the survey, TRAFFIC reported the findings to the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, requesting appropriate action be taken, but as of 3 August 2012, the sale of marine turtles in Pangandaran is still taking place (C.R. Shepherd, *in litt.*, 3 August 2012) and continues to be a significant market for stuffed marine turtles. The openness of the trade, and information provided by vendors, suggest a regular trade in stuffed

whole marine turtles. It is unclear if the absence of turtle eggs represents a change from the past or whether these products are traded only seasonally (the egg-laying season mainly takes place from September to December (Whitten *et al.*, 1996)). Likewise, the absence of turtle oil for sale, as reported by Hilterman and Goverse (2005), may suggest a change in trade dynamics, with a renewed preference for whole turtles. The open, illegal sale and consistent presence of marine turtles in markets that should be easy to monitor (including stalls situated in front of the offices of the nature reserve authorities) is a clear indictment of the Indonesian wildlife conservation authorities' neglect of their duties. With their close proximity, it should be relatively straightforward for the authorities to take action to stop this illegal trade. While detailed quantitative data are lacking, the presence of likely mainly recently, acquired specimens, including a significant proportion of potential breeding adults, and turnover information from traders, suggest that the trade in marine turtles in Pangandaran is significant, and potentially affecting their conservation status. Wildlife protection laws are not being enforced as intended, and, in Pangandaran at least, this is not due to limited capacity but rather to a lack of pressure on the authorities to treat these illegal sales as a priority issue. Collectors, middlemen, traders and consumers (both domestic and international) engaged in illegal activities must be held accountable for their actions and prosecuted, and law enforcers must be given incentives to carry out their duties in this regard with greater efficiency. With highly migratory species such as marine turtles, the impact of the turtle trade in Indonesia has important ramifications for international turtle conservation; the current lack of intervention to stop these illegal sales by officials who should be upholding wildlife protection laws must not be tolerated.

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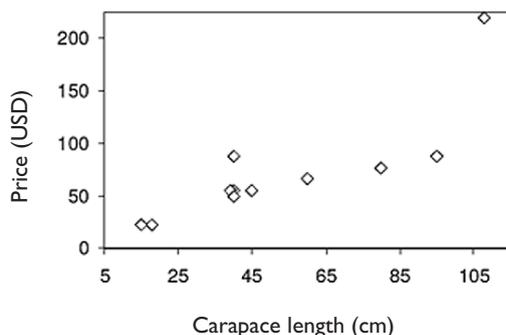


Fig. 2. Relationship between carapace length and asking price for stuffed Green Turtles, Pangandaran, West Java, Indonesia, April 2012.

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