

The research, conservation and management on sea turtle in Viet Nam

Phan Hong Dung

The Department of Marine Biodiversity and Conservation Research; Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF), 170 Lelai, Ngoquyen, Haiphong; Ministry of Fisheries of Viet Nam (MoFI).

Keywords: loggerhead, olive ridley, leatherback, green and hawksbill turtle, Tonkin Gulf, National Park, Reserve Park

It is recognizing that there are five species of sea turtle identified in Vietnam. They are loggerhead, olive ridley, leatherback, green and hawksbill turtle. However, there are only three species often nest on beaches. Major nesting beaches are concentrated on offshore-islands in the Tonkin Gulf, central coasts and the islands in the Southern part of Viet Nam. It is significant declines have occurred in both foraging and nesting populations of sea turtle species found in Viet Nam. The protection of nesting turtles and their nests, reduction in the mortality of juvenile and adult life stages is pertinent to the protection of sea turtles.

The current threats for marine turtles are including: (i) the accidental and opportunistic capture by fishermen and locals; (ii) the direct take of nesting females and their eggs at beaches; (iii) the urbanization, illegal trade issues, sand mining, tourism development and marine debris... The largest risk for marine turtles are bottom trawlers, especially in "Cao bay" trawling with big mesh-size net, gillnet operation, long-line net with several hook operators and diving activities. In general, most green, hawksbill and olive ridley turtles that are captured by those methods for food or the production of souvenirs.

Our results showed that locals have harvested nesting turtles and approximate amount of 70% of eggs still occurring for each species during nesting season, *exception of Tho Chu Island, Con Dao National Park and Nui Chua Reserve Park*. Continuation of those threats will lead to the extinction of sea turtles in Viet Nam in the forthcoming decades. The immediately taken action to preserve sea turtles and other wildlife, based upon the collaboration between National Sectors, Regional Organizations are the best decision.

Corresponding author:

Phone: (84) 31.767277 or 860525

Fax: (84) 31.836812

E-mail: dung1960@yahoo.com or phdung@rimf.org.vn

