



**THE FIRST SEAFDEC MEETING ON  
REGIONAL SEA TURTLE DATA MANAGEMENT**

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**REPORT ON SEA TURTLES STATISTIC  
IN CAMBODIA**

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## REPORT ON SEA TURTLES STATISTIC IN CAMBODIA

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### INTRODUCTION

Sea turtles have been monitored and conserved by Cambodian Government since 7 December 1975 because Cambodia signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on 7 December 1975 and acceded to this convention on 2 October 1997.

To manage and preserve marine living resources is the main responsibility of the Department of Fisheries. So far the Department of Fisheries lacks information about sea turtle habitats, population statistics and nesting sites. This is because the Department of Fisheries has no budget for studying or research.

Previous studies mention that 5 species of sea turtle were found in Cambodian coastline: Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (Try, 1999). Among these turtles, only Hawksbill and Green turtle have often been found in the coastline of Cambodia, especially in Kompong Som Bay around Koh Rong, Koh Rong Salem, Koh Tang and Koh Pring Islands (Tana, 1997).

So in order to get more information on sea turtles, I have selected two locations in Kompong Som Bay for this study in Sihanoukville and Koh Kong provinces. The period for this study was from 4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2000.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

Two methods were selected for this study: the first is to interview fishermen who are fishing along the coastline of Cambodia and the second is questioning the old fishermen who are living in the coastal area. These surveys consisted of 20 fishermen who are fishing in Cambodian Sea. Among these, 13 fishermen are living in Koh Kong province and 7 fishermen are living in Sihanoukville.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The fishermen that were selected for interviewing were classified into three groups: 1) using trawler, 2) using gill nets and 3) hooks line fishermen. Of the 20 fishermen who were selected for interviewing, 9 (45 %) are using trawl, 4 (20 %) are using gill nets and 7 (35 %) are using hooks line.

The results show that 12 (60 %) fishermen said that before 1979, they had found 5 species of sea turtle: Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). More recently they found only Hawksbill, Leatherback and Green turtle around Koh Rong, Koh Rong Salem, Koh Tang, Koh Pring and Koh Kong Krao Islands. Two species of sea turtle, Hawksbill and Green turtle, are often found around these island and Leatherback turtles are very rarely seen and only in the offshore or in the deeper waters. The landing and nesting sites of Hawksbill and Green turtle are located around Koh Kong Krao, Koh Rong and Koh Rong San Loeum Islands. For the question about the number of sea turtles landing and nesting, they said that for Hawksbill and Green turtle, they cannot say exactly, but they estimated that totally around 40 to 50 turtles came ashore in these islands, and around 20 to 30 were nesting. These turtles came to lay eggs during full moon of October and November. For Leatherback turtle, they said they never found this species landing on Cambodian coastlines, but they came for feeding only in the deeper waters and would go back afterwards.

This year, 3 specimens of Green turtle and 2 specimens of Hawksbill turtle were caught by hooks line and trawl by accident.

Four (20 %) fishermen said that only 2 species of turtle, namely Hawksbill and Green turtle were found around Koh Rong, Koh Sdach and Koh Kong Krao Islands during full moon in October and November when they came to lay eggs. They estimated totally around 10 turtles.

Two (10 %) of the fishermen had seen Leatherback turtles in offshore waters during September and October. They came for feeding only and after this they left. This species the fishermen never eat because they are poisonous and the local name is Lmich Bruy Bai.

So far the Department of Fisheries has no information and statistics on sea turtle population, nesting and the number of turtles caught by fishermen, because even though they are caught by accident, they try to hide it from the fisheries authorities.

## RECOMMENDATION

In regard to management and conservation of sea turtles in Cambodia. The Department of Fisheries would like the NGOs and/or International Organisations to supply funds and co-operate with them for studying or surveying landing and nesting sites. If we have no exact information, it will be difficult for the Department of Fisheries to implement protection and conservation of these turtles in the future.



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