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INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY

February 19th, 2017

Dear Ricardo Tapilatu,

I am pleased to invite you to the 37th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 15 – 20 2017 at the Marriott Resort & Spa. This Symposium will be celebrated for the first time in the American desert Southwest. We will have a theme of "The impact of Global Climate Change on Sea Turtles" with other workshops on freshwater turtles and tortoises to continue to keep the ISTS innovating and energized. We want to use this opportunity to promote their broad attendance from throughout the region and around the world. Annual Sea Turtle Symposia aim to strengthen regional and international conservation efforts by providing a venue for the sharing of cutting edge research and conservation practices. Symposium participants have been able to promote their research, connect with other people working in their field, and train future sea turtle advocates. The annual gatherings also provide a unique opportunity for participants to collaborate on projects, forge new partnerships and establish the international networks vital for successful sea turtle conservation.

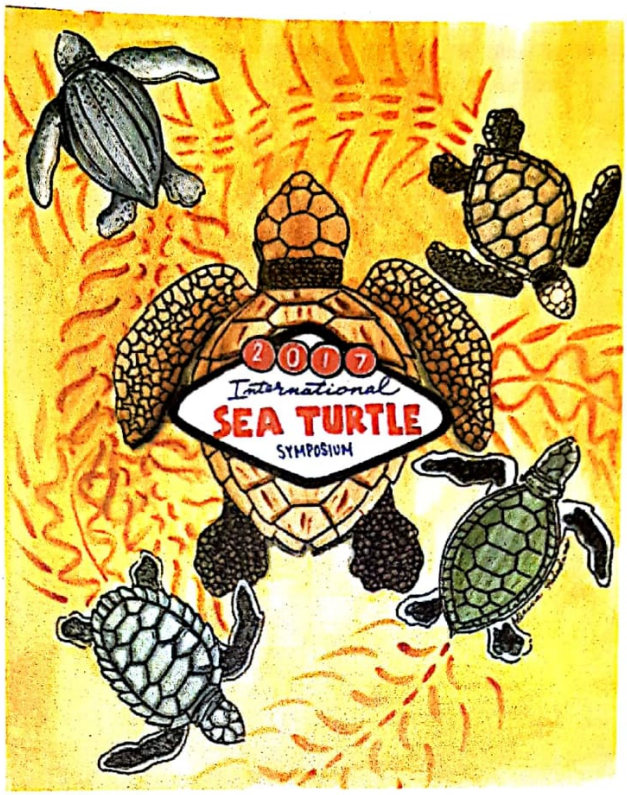
The ISTS is an international non-profit professional organization devoted to the conservation of the marine turtles through sharing of knowledge and international collaboration. Each year the Society organizes and hosts the Annual Sea Turtle Symposium, an international gathering of 800-1000 of the world's foremost sea turtle scientists, conservationists, policy-makers and enthusiasts from more than 80 countries, and the only major conference of its type. More information about the Symposium is available at www.internationalseaturtlesociety.org. Your participation in the planned meetings and activities is critical to the success of the 2017 Symposium. I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 15 – 20 2017 at the Marriott Resort & Spa. .

Warmest regards,

Frank V. Paladino

Frank V. Paladino Ph. D. FAAAS
President ISTS

2017 INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SYMPOSIUM



PROGRAM

37th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

15 – 20 April 2017

INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY

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EVALUATING HATCHLING FITNESS IN RELATION TO NEST TEMPERATURES OF LEATHERBACK (*DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA*) SEA TURTLES AT JAMURSBA MEDI NESTING BEACH, BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE – PAPUA BARAT, INDONESIA

Ricardo F. Tapilatu[1,2)], Amy Bonka[3)], William G. Iwanggin[1)], Hengki Wona[1)], Yairus Swabra[1)], Sadrak Woisiri[1)], Riki M. Mayor[1)], Gideon Waroy[1)], Erick Sembor[1)], Roy Rumbiak[1)], and Thane Wibbels[3)]

[1)] Bird's Head Leatherback Conservation Program - Research Center for Pacific Marine Resources – University of Papua (UNIPA), Manokwari 98314 – Papua Barat INDONESIA
[2)] Marine Science Dept – Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science, University of Papua (UNIPA), Manokwari 98314 – Papua Barat INDONESIA
[3)] Biology Dept – University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), AL – 35294 USA

Abstract

Hatching fitness can significantly affect the survival of sea turtles, and has been shown to be influenced by nest temperatures during the incubation period. During the 2016 nesting season, we monitored fitness of hatchlings in terms of crawl and swimming speeds, and incubation temperatures from both *in situ* and relocated nests of the leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) at Jamursba Medi, Papua Barat, the primary nesting beach for this species in the Western Pacific. We used a drone as a video platform for monitoring hatchlings during their movements down the nesting beach and through the surf. Crawl speed was documented for an average of 10m prior to the hatchling entering the surf. Swimming speed was documented for 30 – 300m during their movements through the surf. During the current study, the hatchling leatherback sea turtles had a mean crawl speed of 0.04 ± 0.009 m/s and a mean swimming speed of 0.55 ± 0.13 m/s. We also monitored beach and nest temperatures throughout the incubation period. Daily mean beach temperatures (30.3±0.8, ranged from 28.6-32.1) and nest incubation temperatures (30.9±1.3, ranged from 28.5-33.8) where hatchlings for the trials were from, were relatively 'warm'. The results of this study provide base-line data for evaluating hatchling fitness relative to crawl speed, swimming speed, and beach-nest incubation temperatures. For example, in the current study crawl speed was lower than those reported for leatherbacks in the eastern Pacific. Monitoring hatchling crawl speed and swim speed at the natural nesting beach provides useful metrics for evaluating hatchling fitness relative to factors such as nest incubation temperature and other ecological aspects of the nesting beaches.

Key words: Leatherback sea turtle; Hatchling; Behavior; Conservation; Ecology; Fitness; Papua; Jamursba Medi; Temperature.

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