

Conserving the leatherback sea turtle

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For over 100 million years, leatherback sea turtles have swum the world's oceans. Each year, these creatures, which represent the last remaining members of the Dermochelyidae family, migrate 6,000 miles from breeding grounds in the western Pacific to feeding areas in the eastern Pacific. California's coast, with its plentiful jellyfish populations, is an important foraging area for leatherbacks, and the Bird's Head Peninsula of West Papua is the major nesting area for the western Pacific population of the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle.

Pacific leatherback conservation efforts at the nesting beaches were sporadic in the 1970s, but were expanded following publication of the US Recovery Plan in 1996 and the collapse of the eastern Pacific nesting populations. More recently, after the discovery that the leatherbacks foraging in California waters and caught in Hawaii...

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