



Management, habitat use, and population structure of leatherback turtles in Indonesia

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Motivation

Indonesia is home to the endangered leatherback sea turtle. The known threats are egg poaching, pollution, incidental catches, illegal trade, and habitat degradation. The Indonesian government flags sea turtles as a high conservation priority, yet conservation programs are implemented limitedly. Developing an effective and well-founded conservation program is hampered by the incomplete and disparate knowledge of basic sea turtle ecologies, such as distribution, population demographics, migration patterns, and habitat use in Indonesia.

Limited data and knowledge on leatherback turtles in Indonesia might have caused the species to be managed inadequately. More studies and explorations with more samples from various sites are needed to fill the knowledge gaps before the populations go locally extinct. Along with governance information, these population and habitat data are crucial to support conservation management of the species in Indonesia so policymakers can produce a relevant regulation for better management in protecting leatherback turtles and their habitat in Indonesia.

Aims and Objectives

The main goal of this study is to fill gaps in knowledge on management, habitat use, and population of leatherback turtles in Indonesia to improve the leatherback turtle conservation management in Indonesia. The study will demonstrate multiple approaches and methods to achieve this goal. This goal will be translated into four following chapters that will be carried out during the project (Figure 1): (1) management of sea turtles in Indonesia: a review of governance and protection, (2) habitat modelling of nesting and foraging sites of leatherback turtles, (3) population trends of leatherback turtles in Indonesia: a case study from nesting sites in Aceh (Sumatra) and (4) Identifying Regional Management Units of Indonesian leatherback turtles using population genomics and isotope signals, and published data of satellite tracking.

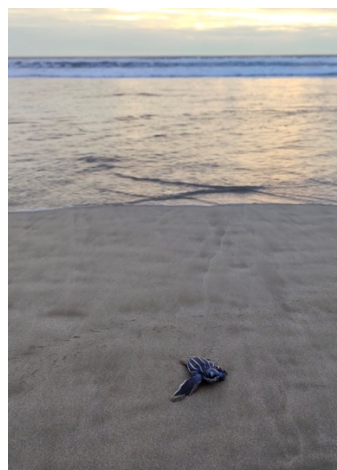
Method

We will apply approaches in ecology, such as ecological niche modelling and stable isotope analyses, together with state-of-the-art techniques in genomics in an extensive

research effort on leatherbacks in Indonesia. The coordinated integration of ecological and genetic data will enable us to provide a rigorous understanding of the status of the leatherback turtle populations in Indonesia.



Overview of the project goal



Hatchling of leatherback from Sumatra

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