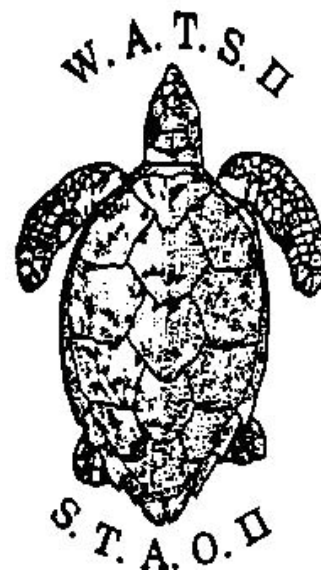


WATS II REPORT / DATA SET

Ad Hoc National Report to WATS II for JAMAICA

Rhema Kerr

12 October 1987



WATS2 067

With a grant from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, WIDECAST has digitized the databases and proceedings of the **Western Atlantic Turtle Symposium (WATS)** with the hope that the revitalized documents might provide a useful historical context for contemporary sea turtle management and conservation efforts in the Western Atlantic Region.

With the stated objective of serving “as a starting point for the identification of critical areas where it will be necessary to concentrate all efforts in the future”, the first Western Atlantic Turtle Symposium convened in Costa Rica (17-22 July 1983), and the second in Puerto Rico four years later (12-16 October 1987). WATS I featured National Reports from 43 political jurisdictions; 37 presented at WATS II.

WATS I opened with these words: “The talks which we started today have the multiple purpose of bringing our knowledge up to date about the biological peculiarities of the marine turtle populations of the western Atlantic; to know and analyse the scope of the National Reports prepared by the scientific and technical personnel of more than thirty nations of the region; to consider options for the orderly management of marine turtle populations; and in general to provide an adequate forum for the exchange of experiences among scientists, administrators, and individuals interested in making contributions for the preservation of this important natural resource.”

A quarter-century has passed, and the results of these historic meetings have been lost to science and to a new generation of managers and conservationists. Their unique importance in providing baseline data remains unrecognized, and their potential as a “starting point” is neither known nor appreciated.

The proceedings document what was known at the time concerning the status and distribution of nesting and foraging habitat, population sizes and trends, mortality factors, official statistics on exploitation and trade, estimated incidental catch, employment dependent on turtles, mariculture operations, public and private institutions concerned with conservation and use, legal aspects (e.g. regulations, enforcement, protected areas), and active research projects.

Despite the potential value of this information to agencies responsible for conducting stock assessments, monitoring recovery trends, safeguarding critical habitat, and evaluating conservation successes in the 21st century, the National Reports submitted to WATS II were not included in the published proceedings and, until now, have existed only in the private libraries of a handful of agencies and symposium participants. To help ensure the legacy of these symposia, we have digitized the entire proceedings – including National Reports, plenary presentations and panels, species synopses, and annotated bibliographies from both meetings – and posted them online at <http://www.widecast.org/What/RegionalPrograms.html>.

Each article has been scanned from the original document. Errors in the scan have been corrected; however, to be true to the original content (as closely as we can discern it), potential errors of content have not been corrected. This article can be cited (with the number of pages based on the layout of the original document) as:

Kerr, R. 1987. Ad Hoc National Report to WATS II for Jamaica. Prepared for the Second Western Atlantic Turtle Symposium (WATS II), 12-16 October 1987, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Doc. 067. 6 pages.

Karen L. Eckert
WIDECAST Executive Director
June 2009

INTRODUCTION

In 1983, the National Report submitted to WATS I was based mainly on interviews with fishermen. It also included data from aerial surveys of the coastline and offshore cays and surveys conducted by WECAFC and the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. The interviews with fishermen supplied reports of former nesting beaches and foraging areas. All indications pointed to a serious decline on the turtle population.

Since WATS I, data collection has been limited. Four (4) aerial surveys and three (3) ground truth surveys were carried out between September and December 1983. Thus, the only nesting beaches known with any reliability (tracks / nests / hatchlings observed) are:

Pedro Cay	(Morant Cay Group)	Tracks	1981
Middle Cay	(Morant Cay Group)	Tracks	1982
Rocky Cay	(Morant Cay Group)	Tracks	1982
Plumb Point	(Port Royal)	Old nests/shell fragments	1983
Fort Charles	(Port Royal)	Tracks	1983
Guts River	(Clarendon)	Nests	1983
Treasure Beach	(St. Elizabeth)	Nests with eggs	1987
Runaway Bay	(St. Ann)	Nests, hatchlings	1987

It is hard to exaggerate the difficulty in obtaining anything close to a complete account of hawksbill nesting, as the species is able to utilize very effectively very small beach areas and offshore cays. In the area that has yielded the most nests, the seaward Palisadoes peninsula, five (5) nests were found within 1 m of each other, in the shelter of *Stenocereus* and *Acacia tortiles* scrub, and at the base of *Melocactus*. The nests appeared to have been excavated, the most likely agent being dogs.

The beach in Runaway Bay in St. Ann is the site of a major resort hotel, but here the hotel management enclosed the nest with a wire fence and kept the hatchling turtles until they measured 10 cm and then released them. Sixty percent of the 63 turtles hatched in July have been released.

EXPLOITATION

Use and trade in sea turtle products

No complete data on exploitation exists. The WECAFC survey in 1981 indicated that 60,000 kg of turtle meat taken. Reports received from the Natural Resources Conservation Department (NRCD) are investigated and followed up as far as personnel and finances will allow.

The most obvious of all products is the turtle meat, which despite the ban can still be had in several restaurants. Incidences of turtle capture on record are as follows:

April 1985	Bull Bay, St Thomas	sub-adult turtle
June 1985	Cardiff, St. Ann	adult turtle
September 1985	Carlyle Beach, St. Ann	adult turtle

Other incidences of turtle capture/utilization:

1985	Report of the sale of turtle meat in a restaurant in Kingston
December 1985	Turtle shell products displayed at a craft fair
December 1986	Turtle shell being bought (US\$8/kg being paid by dealers in Negril)
December 1986	Sale of meat in Negril, Westmoreland. Turtles of all sizes and eggs being taken; Cosmos Beach: turtles slaughtered every week

International Trade

Since 1983, only two (2) exports of shell were licensed by the NRCD, (the Agency authorized to issue exemption to the Wild Life Protection Act). These were exempted because they were part of the pre-1976 stock. The amount totaled just over 450 kg. The destination was the Federal Republic of Germany.

While there have been no other legal exportation or importation as far the NRCD knows (Ann Haynes-Sutton *pers. com.*), the Japanese customs and dealers report a very different picture between 1970 and 1986 – 14,285 kg of hawksbill shell were received from Jamaica. The data showed considerable fluctuation in the volume of trade from year to year, with a high of 2, 581 kg in 1973.

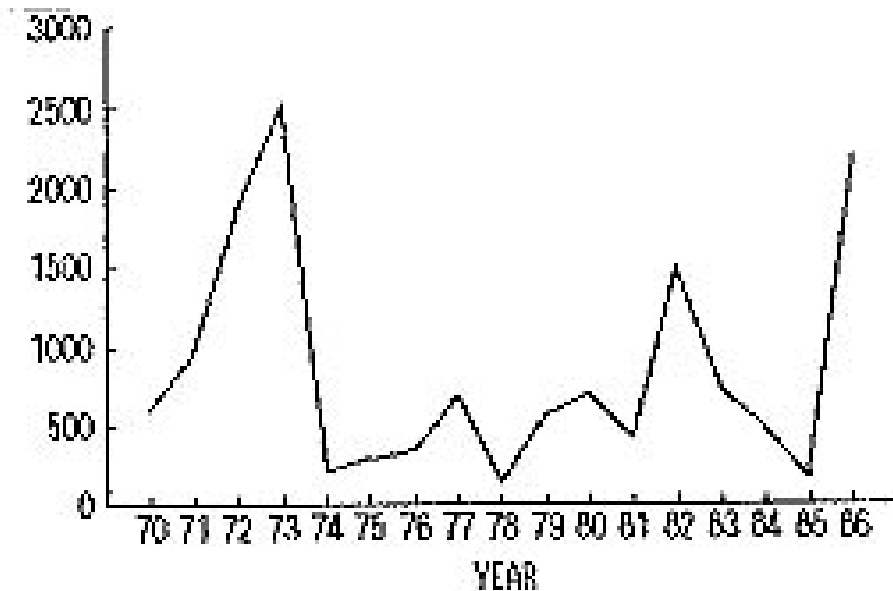


Figure 1. Japanese import of hawksbill shell from Jamaica 1970-1986. Source: Japanese Customs Statistics (Milliken and Tokunaga 1987).

Since 1978, there has been a rise in the exports (except for the period 1981-83). This increase is thought to be due to the use of Jamaica, a non-signatory to CITES, as an intermediary port for shipments en route to Japan. Based on an average weight of one animal per 1.5 kg. (as given by an experienced dealer), exports from Jamaica represent about 9, 500 hawksbill over a ten (10) year period.

The TRAFFIC (Japan) / Center for Environmental Education report also identifies export of green turtle shell from Jamaica, but these (except in 1980 when 997 kg were imported) were comparatively small volumes. These figures, and the lack of knowledge of the trade on the part of Jamaican authorities, is cause for concern and clearly demonstrates the continuing difficulty raised by Jamaica's non-signatory relationship with CITES.

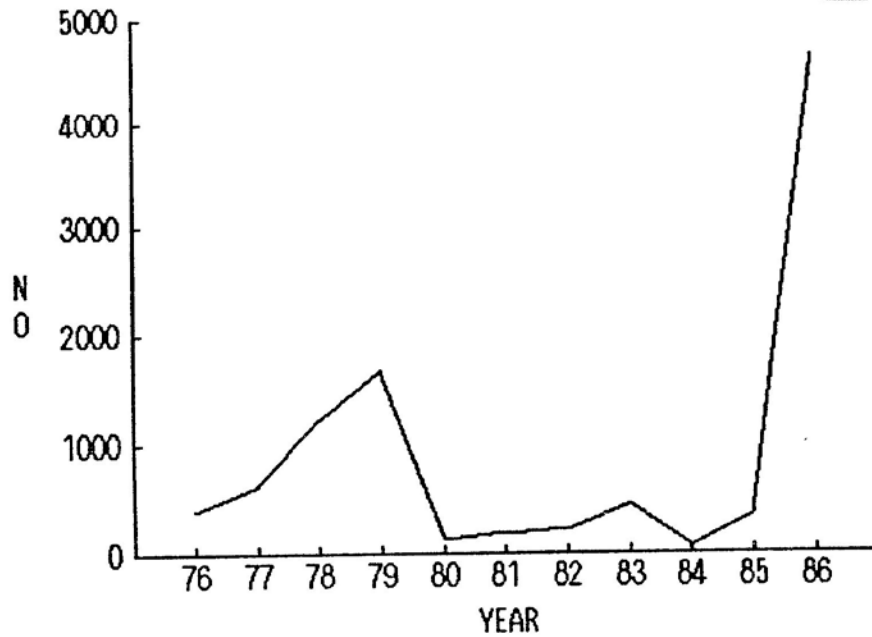


Figure 2. Estimated number of hawksbill represented by Japanese imports of hawksbill shell from Jamaica. Japanese Customs data, calculated at 1.50 kg shell/animal. Source: Japanese Customs Statistics (Milliken and Tokunaga, 1987).

MORTALITY

No new data on other sources of turtle mortality.

FORAGING

No new data on foraging areas.

RESEARCH PROJECTS/SURVEYS

The NRCD's head-starting programme was halted because of lack of personnel. Guy Harvey of the University of the West Indies had head-started hawksbills in a large fiberglass container at Port Royal.

SURVEYS SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1983 AND OCTOBER 1985

Aerial surveys	Date	Location	Identifiers		Comments
			Tracks	Nests	
	14 September 1983	Fort Charles (Port Royal)	1		
	14 September 1983	Guts River	1	2	
	14 September 1983	Plumb Point (Palasadoes)		1	
	12 December 1983	Plumb Point (Palasadoes)		3	
	12 December 1983	Portland Bight & adjacent cay		3	A total of 8 turtles seen in this area
	21 October 1985	Palasadoes			1 false crawl
Ground truth surveys					
	21 October 1983	Palasadoes		5	Old nests; no nests with eggs
	22 October 1983	Plumb Point (Port Royal)		3	Old nests

AGENCIES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION

- The Natural Resources Conservation Department
Ministry of Agriculture
53½ Molynes Road
Kingston 10
Telephone: 92-35155/35266
Director: Dr. S.C. Sinha
- The Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture
Marcus Garvey Drive
Kingston, Jamaica
Telephone: 92-38811/37571
- The Trade Board
1st Floor
City Centre Building
Block A, Oceania
- The Marine Police

OTHER INFORMATION AND COMMENTS

Problems of sea turtle management in Jamaica

In Jamaica a situation currently exists here, the thread of institutional responsibility has been woven into a web. Add to this the problems of limited resources (primarily human resources) and a perfect recipe for inertia has been formulated. The NRCD has the responsibility for the Sea Turtle Conservation Programme through its enforcement of the Wild Life Protection Act 1982 (WLPA). This programme included overseeing the enforcement of the ban on harvesting turtles, conducting research, surveys and a public education campaign. The Fisheries Division has responsibility for the management of marine resources, it has direct responsibility through the Morant and Pedro Cays Act and less directly through the Fisheries Act of 1975. It has the link with that all-important group, the 12,000 registered fishermen.

In the past, the Fisheries Division had been concerned primarily with the management of sea turtles as an important economic resource, whilst the NRCD was seen to more involved in the

conservation. Obviously a national boundary exists here, and how good management can be separated from a conservation focus is hard to imagine. In 1983, the Fisheries Division and the NRCDC coordinated their effort (after much time had elapsed) to conduct surveys and prepare national reports for WATS I. Fortunately, whilst the official representation came from the Fisheries Division, the NRCDC which had done most of the work (it could then afford to assign personnel specifically to the sea turtle program) was able to participate in the Symposium.

In 1987, such a level of coordination was not possible, partly because there no longer existed staff whose major responsibility was to get a programme underway, and partly due to the indecision as to whom should be given official representation. Added to this there remains the vexed question of the continued lack of protected areas for the important habitats and ecosystems in Jamaica. In truth, two (2) marine parks do exist, but no protection or active management of these is being carried out.

In general, the relevant laws have very little chance of being enforced. The Fisheries Division has Fisheries officers stationed at 10 out of 184 beaches in Jamaica and the NRCDC has three (3) Conservation Wardens for the entire island.

Recommendations

1. That a detailed examination of the needs, problems of developing an effective sea turtle management programme in Jamaica be undertaken
2. There is urgent need for coordinated action on the part of all agencies concerned with turtles. A sea turtle programme may best be carried out by a management committee comprised of Government and non-government organizations including the NRCDC, the Fisheries Division, the University of the West Indies, the Coast Guard, the Marine Police, Trade Board, UNEP and any other interested NGOs.
3. That the plan has to include:
 - a. Research/survey/monitoring of sea turtle stocks to build an accurate database on which to base further management options
 - b. Public education for fishermen and wider public; for all agencies that might impact favorably on a management programme (Coast Guard, Marine Police, Customs Officers etc.)
 - c. Seek to gain support for actively managed protected areas; for Jamaica's participation in CITES.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Dr. Peter Bacon, Zoology Department, University of the West Indies., WATS Executive Committee member for his assistance in formulating this report
- Mrs. Ann Haynes Sutton for reviewing and enriching the report
- Messrs. Moo Young and Houghton of the Fisheries Division and Dr. S.C. Sinha of the NRCDC for valuable contributions to the report.

*October 1987
Rhema Kerr
Kingston Jamaica*

REFERENCES

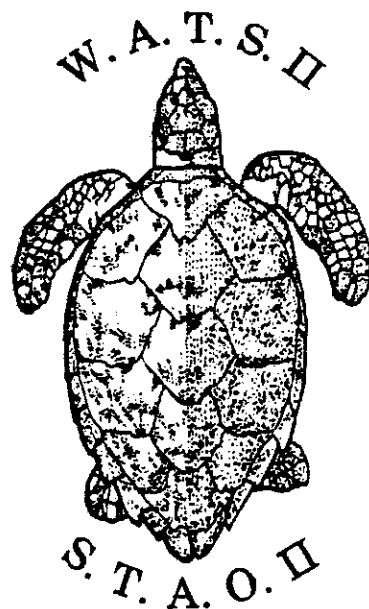
Milliken, T. and H. Tokunaga. 1987. The Japanese Sea Turtle Trade 1970 - 1986. TRAFFIC (Japan) / Center for Environmental Education.

WATS II REPORT/DATA SET

National Report to WATS II for Jamaica

Rhema Kerr

12 October 1987



WATS2 067

Rec 12 Oct/87
AOK

ADHOC REPORT TO THE 2ND WESTERN ATLANTIA
TURTLE SYMPOSIUM (WATS II)
Country : JAMAICA

1. In 1983, the National report submitted to WATS I, was based mainly on interviews with fishermen. It also included data from Aerial surveys of the coastline and off-shore cays, and surveys conducted by WECAF and the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. The interviews with fishermen supplied reports of former nesting beaches and foraging areas. All indications pointed to a series decline in the turtle population.

Since WATS II, data collection has been limited. Four (4) aerial surveys and three (3) ground truth surveys were carried out between September and December 1983. Thus the only nesting beaches known with any reliability (Tracks/Nests/Hatchings) observed are;

Middle Cay	(Morant Cay Group	Tracks	1982
Rockey Cay	" " "	Tracks	1982
Pedro Cay	" " "	Tracks	1981
Plumb Point	(Port Royal)	1983	old nests/shell fragments
Fort Charles	" "	1983	tracks
Guts River	(Clarendon)	1983	nests
Treasure Beach	(St. Elizabeth)	1987	nests with eggs
Runaway Bay	(St. Ann)	1987	nests, hatching turtles

It is hard to ~~exaggerate~~ ^{exaggerate} the difficulty in obtaining anything close to a complete account of hawksbill nesting, as the species is able to utilize very effectively very small beach areas and off-shore cays. In the area that has yielded the most nests, the sea ward Palisadoes peninsula, 5 nests were found within 1m of each other, in the shelter of Stenocercus and Acacia tortilis scrub, and at the base of Melocactus. The nests appeared to have been excavated - the most likely agent being dogs.

The beach in Runaway Bay in St. Ann is the site of a major resort hotel, but ^{here} ~~have~~ the hotel management enclosed the nest with a wire fence, and kept the hatching turtles until they measured to ¹⁰ cm and then released them. 60% of the (63) turtles hatched in July have been released.

Exploitation - The use of/trade in sea turtle products

No complete date on exploitation exists. The WECAF survey in 1981 indicated 60,000 kg. of turtle meat taken. Reports received by the Natural Resources Conservation Department (NRCD) are investigated and followed up as far as personnel and finances will allow.

The most obvious of all products is the turtle meat. The despite the ban can still be had in several restaurants. Incidences of turtle capture on record are as follows:

April	1985	Bull Bay, St. Thomas	Sub Adult
June	1985	Cardiff, St. Ann	Adult Turtle
Sept.	1987	Carlyle Beach, St. Ann	

Other incidences of turtle capture/utilization;

1985 - report to the sale of turtle meat in a restaurant in Kingston

Dec. 1986 - sale of meat in Negril - Westmoreland.

Turtles of all size and eggs being taken

Cosmos Beach - turtles slaughtered every week.

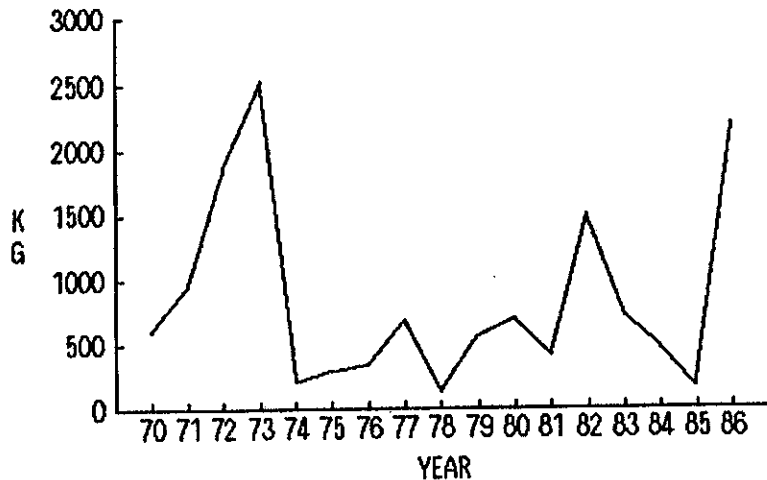
Dec. 1985- Turtles shell products displayed at a Craft Fair

Dec. 1986- Turtles shell being bought (US\$8/kg being paid by dealers) in Negril

2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE:

Since 1983, only (2) exports of shell were licensed by the Natural Resources Conservation Department (NRCD) (the Agency Authorised to issue exemptions to the Wildlife Protection Act.) These were exempted as being of Pre-1976 stock, and amounted to just over 450 kg.. Destination - The Federal Republic of Germany.

Whilst there have been no other legal exportation or importation, as far as the Natural Resources Conservation Department knows, (Ann Haynes -Sutton *pers com.*), the Japanese customs and dealers report a very different picture. Between 1970 - 1986 - 14,285 kg. of hawksbill shell were received from Jamaica - The data showed considerable fluctuations in the volume of trade from year to year, with a high of 2,521 kg. in 1973. Since 1978, there has been;



Japanese import of Hawksbill Shell from Jamaica 1970 - 1976.

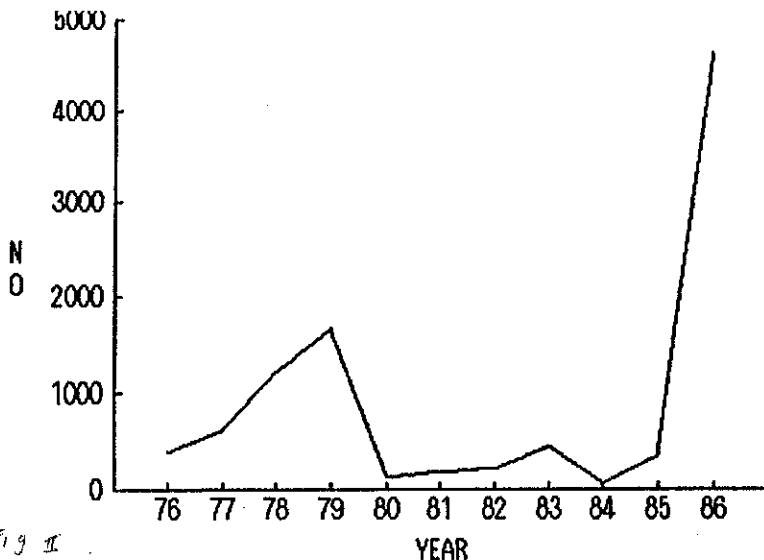
Source - Japanese customs statistics.

(Milliken T and Tokunaha H. 1987)

A rise in the exports (except the period 81 - 83)

This increase is thought to be due to the use of Jamaica (a NON-Signatory to CITES) as an intermediary Port for shipments en route to JAPAN.

Based on a average weight of one animal per 1.5 kg. - (as given by an experienced dealer) exports from Jamaica represent about 9,500 hawksbill over a (10) year period.



Estimated number of Hawksbill represented by Japanese Imports of Hawksbill shell from Jamaica.

Source: Japanese customs data calculated at 1.50 kg. shell/animal.

The TRAFFIC (Japan)/C.E.E. report also identifies export of green turtle shell from Jamaica, but these (except in 1980 when 997 kg. were imported) were comparatively small volumes.

From these figures, and the lack of knowledge of the trade on the part of Jamaican authorities is cause for concern and clearly demonstrates the continuing difficulty raised by Jamaica's Non-signatory relationship to C.I.T.E.S.

- D. No new data on other sources of sea turtle mortality
- E. No new data on foraging areas
- F. Research projects/surveys. //The NRCD's head starting Programme halted (lack of personnel) Previous to this, Guy Harvey of the University of the West Indies had head-started Hawksbill in a large fibreglass container by Port Royal.

AERIAL SURVEYS SEPT. - DEC. 1983

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Tracks</u>	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Comments</u>
14.9.83	- Fort Charles (Port Royal)	1		
"	- Guts River	1	2	
"	- Plumb Point (Palasadoes)		1	

21.10.85 - Palasadoes 1 False Crawl

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Track</u>	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Comments</u>
12.12.83	Plumb Point		3	
	Portland Bight & adjacent cay ^A		3	(A total of 8 turtles seen in this area)

Ground truth survets

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Tracks</u>	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Comments</u>
21.10.83	Palasadoes		5	Old nests, (no nests with eggs.)
22.10.83	Plumb Point Port Royal		3	Old nests

AGENCIES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION:

The Natural Resources Conservation Department (NRCD) of the
 Ministry of Agriculture
 53^{1/2} Molynes Road
 Kingston 10
 Telephone: 92-35155/35166 - 9
 Director - Dr S.C. Sinha

The Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture
 Margus Garvey Drive
 Kingston, Jamaica
 Telephone: 92-38811/37571
 Director - Roy Moo Young

Trade Board
 1st Floor
 City centre Building
 Block A
 Oceana

The Marine Police

OTHER INFORMATION AND COMMENTS:

inertia Problems of sea turtle management in Jamaica a situation currently exists where the thread of institutional responsibility/chain of command has been woven into a web. Add to this the problem of limited resources (primarily manpower) and a perfect recipe for *inertia* has been formulated. The NRCD has responsibility for the Sea Turtle Conservation Programme through its enforcement of Wildlife Protection Act 1982 (WLPA).

This programme included overseeing the enforcement of the ban on harvesting turtles, conducting research/surveys and a public education campaign. The Fisheries Division has responsibility for the management of Marine Resources, it has direct responsibility, the Morant and Pedro Cays Act and less directly through the Fisheries Act of 1975. It has the link with that all important group, the 12,000 registered fishermen.

In the past, the Fisheries Division been concerned primarily with the management of turtles as an important economic resource, whilst NRCO was seen to be involved more in the conservation. Obviously a *notional* boundary exists here; how good management can be separated from a conservation focus is hard to imagine. In 1983, the Fisheries Division and the NRCO co ordinated their efforts (after much time has elapsed) to conduct surveys and prepare the National Reports for WAT II. Fortunately, whilst the official representation came from the Fisheries Division, the NRCO which had done most of the work (it could then afford to assign personnel specifically to the sea turtle programme) was able to participate in the symposium.

In 1987, such a level of co ordination was not possible - partly because there no longer existed staff whose major responsibility was to get a programme underway, and partly due to indecision as to whom should ^{be given} official representation ~~go~~. To be added to this, there remains the vexed question of the continued lack of protected areas for the important ^{habitats} ^{and} ecosystems in Jamaica; In truth, ~~two~~ (2) Marine Parks do exist, but no protection or active management of these is being carried out..

In general, the relevant laws have very little chance of being enforced, (The Fisheries Division has Fisheries officers stationed at 10 out 184 beaches in Jamaica; the NRCO has (3) Conservation Wardens for the entire island.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That a detailed examination of the needs, problems of developing on effective sea turtle management programme in Jamaica be undertaken.
2. There is urgent need for co-ordinated action on the part of all agencies concerned with turtles.

A sea turtle programme may best carried out by a management Committee comprised of Government and non-Government agencies (NGOs) (the NRCO Fisheries Division, the University of the West Indies, the Coast Guard, The Marine Police, Trade Board, UNEP, and any other interested-NGOs (NGOs))

3. That the plan has to include;
 - a) Research/survey/monitoring of sea turtle stock, to build an accurate data base on which to base further management options and policy.
 - b) Public Education for fishermen and wider public; work for all agencies that might ^{impact} ~~import~~ favorably on A Management programme (Coast Guard, Marine Police, Customs Officers etc).
 - c) Seek to gain support for actively managed protected areas, for Jamaica's participation in the CITES convention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Dr Peter Bacon of Zoological Department, University of the West Indies (UWI)

WAP II Executive Committee Member, for his assistance in the formulation of the report

- Mrs. Ann Haynes - Sutton for reviewing and enriching the report.
- Messrs Moo Young, Houghton of Fisheries Division, and Dr. S.C. Sinha of the NRCO for the valuable contributions to the report.

Rhema Kerr
Kingston, Jamaica

October 1987

Milliken T and Tokunaga H. The Japanese Sea Turtle Trade 1970 - 1976
TRAFFIC (JAPAN)/ Center for Environmental Education 1987 8

RECEIVED: W