

SEASCAPES IN FOCUS

Conservation International

2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 500

Arlington, VA 22202

<http://marine.conservation.org>



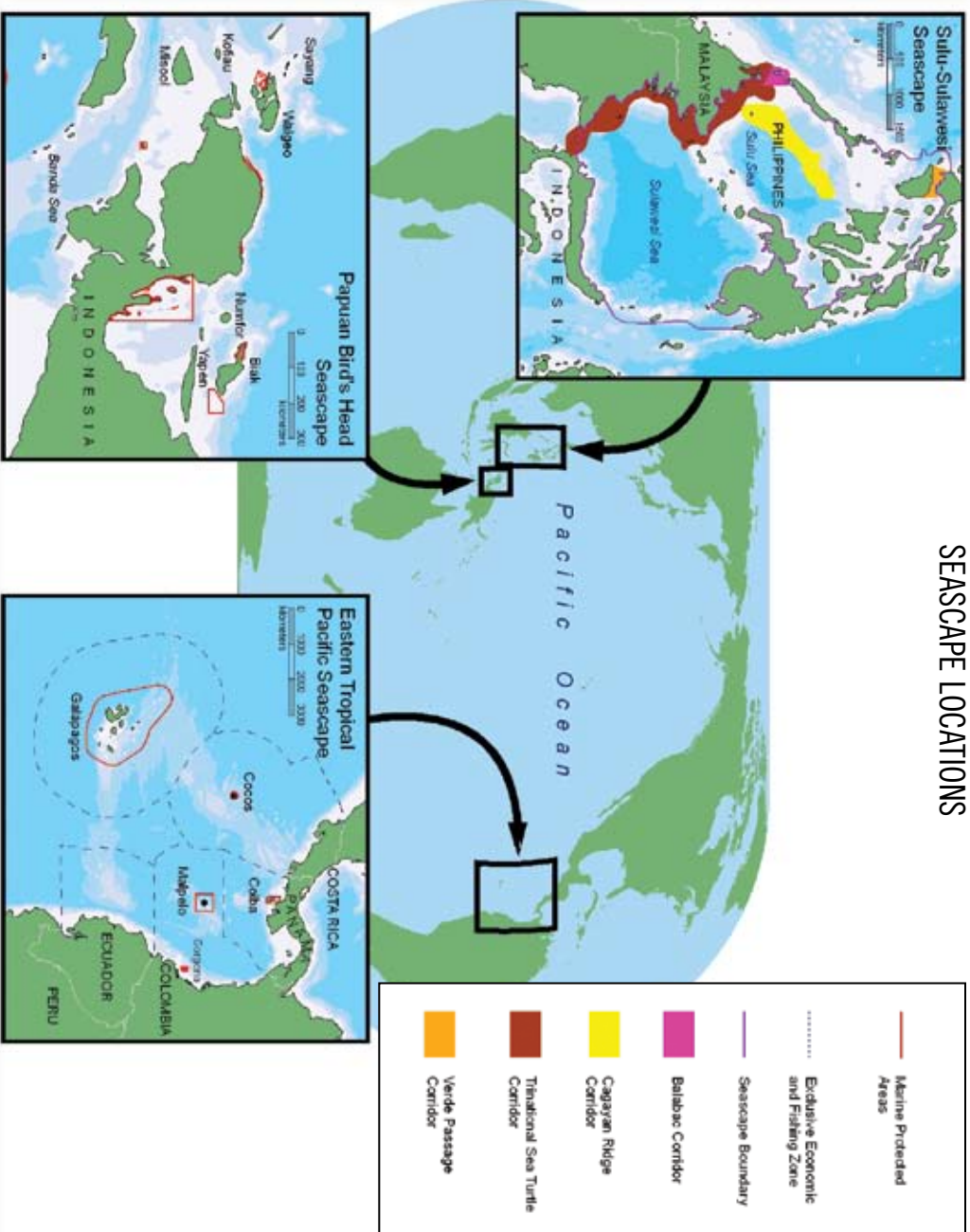
A Giant sea anemone (*Stichodactyla gigantea*) and pink anemonefish, (*Amphiprion perideraion*).

SEASCAPES IN FOCUS

Seascapes are large, multiple-use marine areas, defined scientifically and strategically, in which government authorities, private organizations and other stakeholders cooperate to conserve the diversity and abundance of marine life and to promote human well-being.

If you are interested in learning more or want to support the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascapes contact:

SEASCAPES LOCATIONS



SCOTT HENDERSON

Regional Marine Program Coordinator, Andes CBC/ Eastern Tropical Pacific
shenderson@conservation.org

ROBERT BENSTED-SMITH

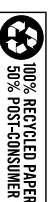
Executive Director, Andes CBC
rbensted@conservation.org

ROGER MCMANUS

Vice President for Marine Programs
rmcmanus@conservation.org

CI'S MISSION

Founded in 1987, Conservation International (CI) believes that the Earth's natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth's living heritage, our global diversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.



100% RECYCLED PAPER
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Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in sea grass.

Indonesian Minister Announces Raja Ampat MPA Network

On May 12, 2007, Indonesian Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Freddy Numberi and Head of the Raja Ampat Regency Marcus Wanma announced the creation of a network of seven MPAs in the center of the ultra-diverse Bird's Head Seascape. The network covers over 9,000 km² and includes coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds.



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Raja Ampat's marine ecosystems rank among the most diverse in the world.

Comprising six newly declared MPAs and a marine wildlife sanctuary gazetted in 1993, this network protects a range of habitats and unique biological features. The Teluk Mayalibit MPA protects a unique saltwater bay that penetrates 30 km inland and is home to pink *Sousa* dolphins, rare sawfish, and massive spawning aggregations of mackerel. In contrast, the Wayag/Sayang/Uranie Archipelago MPA covers a visu-

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The Vision of Raja Ampat

Marcus Wanma is a key decision maker in The Bird's Head Seascape and here is one of his recent statements referring to the new MPA network declared in Raja Ampat:

The vision of Raja Ampat's people shows our spirit as a marine community. We are highly reliant on our marine natural resources. Our future is dependent on two development sectors: fisheries and marine tourism. These two sectors will be the engine of our local economy. In advancing these sectors, the government of Raja Ampat subscribes to the principle of sustainable development. It is important that everybody in Raja Ampat subscribes to this principle, as the development of Raja Ampat does not solely depend on the govern-

ment but also others, namely the community and the private sector.

In keeping with the spirit of the community, and with the help of Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy, we are happy and proud to support this community initiative to establish seven local marine conservation areas in Raja Ampat. We believe that marine conservation areas are necessary for the development of our Regency and to maintain the health of our marine environment – the heart of our life – for today and tomorrow. This also shows our commitment to sustainable development for Raja Ampat.

The challenge now for us is to make sure these conservation areas are functioning as intended. I call on everyone concerned for



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Raja Ampat to work together to make this happen for the sake of our nature and well being of our people.

Marcus Wanma, head of the Raja Ampat Regency, delivers a speech during a traditional Adat ceremony celebrating the establishment of a MPA in Piai Island.

RAJA AMPAT FEATURE STORY

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ally stunning and uninhabited set of islands and reefs that include the Wayag Karst Islands and the green turtle rookery on the Sayang and Piai Islands.

The formal network declaration is the culmination of a movement begun nearly four years ago by traditional resource owners who wanted to protect their productive reefs from overfishing by commercial fisheries and destructive practices such as bomb and cyanide fishing. CI and partners, including The Nature Conservancy and

KONPERS, are assisting the government in developing multiple-use zoning plans for the MPAs that will prioritize sustainable artisanal fisheries and marine tourism development and largely exclude commercial fisheries. Raja Ampat is considered one of the “hottest” dive destinations on the planet, and the MPA network declaration should help cement the growth of this important income-generating industry for the benefit of local resource owners.



Map of new Raja Ampat MPA network.

BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE

Kaimana Corridor Initiative Launched

The Kaimana regency government and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries co-hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop in

Kaimana in late April to discuss plans for a marine conservation initiative in the area, based upon results of a CI-led survey that revealed superlative biodiversity and fish biomass on the reefs of

Kaimana in the southern Bird's Head Seascape. CI had recommended that the government consider developing a MPA of roughly 1,000 km² in

A new species of *Hoplolatilus* tilefish discovered in Triton Bay.

Triton Bay, but the enthusiastic head of the Kaimana regency instead proposed a much larger 7,500 km² multiple-use MPA covering the entire "Kaimana Marine Corridor." Local traditional leaders and Ministry officials alike were strongly in favor of the plan, which will exclude trawling and most commercial fisheries from this sensitive coastal area and instead promote sustainable artisanal fisheries for local communities and the development of marine tourism.



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EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC SEASCAPE

Strengthening Enforcement in Cocos Island

In February, a group of 30

people who protect Cocos Island National Park – including the Coast Guard Service, Ministry of the Environment, the District Attorney's Office, the National Bureau of Investigation, MarViva, Cocos Island UNDP/GEF project, and park managers

– met to discuss enforcement, collection and custody of evidence, patrol operational procedures, legal considerations and tools, and lessons learned during the past year. The group identified the needs for a national law to regulate navigation, experienced a real-case scenario of enforcement and evidence collection, and agreed on plans for joint management of the peak fishing season.

Participants at the Cocos Island enforcement meeting.



© RAFAEL VARGAS

SULU-SULAWESI SEASCAPE

Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape Congress

In June, CI and partners met for a Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape Congress in Manila. The event was a huge success with 119 participants representing government institutions, non-government organizations, academic and research institutions as well as local government units from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Presentations

and posters reported on a broad range of natural and social science results and actions in the Seascape. The Congress served as a venue for government officials and policy-makers to exchange information with scientists and conservationists and to recommend priority actions to address urgent threats. Participants also discussed future directions for the Seascape. One of the congress

highlights was the participation of Hon. Angelo T. Reyes, Secretary of the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who reaffirmed the country's commitment to work with Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts in furthering conservation of biodiversity in the Seascape.

Seascapist: Sandra Bessudo

On May 10, 2007, at the Royal Geographic Society in London, HRH The Princess Royal presented Sandra Bessudo, Executive Director of Malpelo Foundation, with the Whitley Award's

Silver medal for her long-term efforts to study and protect shark populations. The Whitley Award is one of the world's most prestigious conservation prizes. Sandra will use the award to strengthen research on movements of shark species, including the scalloped hammerhead, an iconic species of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascapes under great threat in most of its range, and the

sand tiger shark, a deep-water species rarely seen in its natural habitat. Malpelo Foundation – CI's principal Colombian

“The hammerhead sharks we are tracking highlight the biological connections that exist across the Eastern Tropical Pacific and demonstrate why we need to collaborate for effective conservation at the Seascapes level.”

SANDRA BESSUDO



Sandra Bessudo accepts an award from The Princess Royal.

partner in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascapes – under the strong leadership of Sandra led the successful effort to have the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary expanded; supported its declaration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site; oversaw the deployment of a fully dedicated patrol boat under an innovative inter-institutional agreement that includes the Navy, Parks Service, Malpelo Foundation, and CI; and created a trust fund to underwrite core management costs – all in the last two years.

©

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

A Seascapes Species – the Leatherback Turtle

The leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) is a real seascapes species. It is the largest sea turtle, reaching lengths of up to seven feet and weighing as much as two thousand pounds, and it undertakes the longest migration of any sea turtle, swimming up to 10,000 km in a year. Leatherback turtles tagged with satellite transmit-

ters on nesting beaches in the Bird's Head Seascapes have been tracked to waters in the Sulu Sulawesi Seascapes and even as far as California's Monterey Bay. The species unites CI's three seascapes, not only because their long migrations touch each region, but also because each seascapes hosts important nesting and foraging habitats

A leatherback sea turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*.

for this Critically Endangered species. A true flagship species, it recently attracted the attention of millions of people in the US and beyond through The Great Turtle Race communication campaign which raised awareness about the leatherback turtles nesting in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascapes.

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SCIENCE UPDATES

BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE

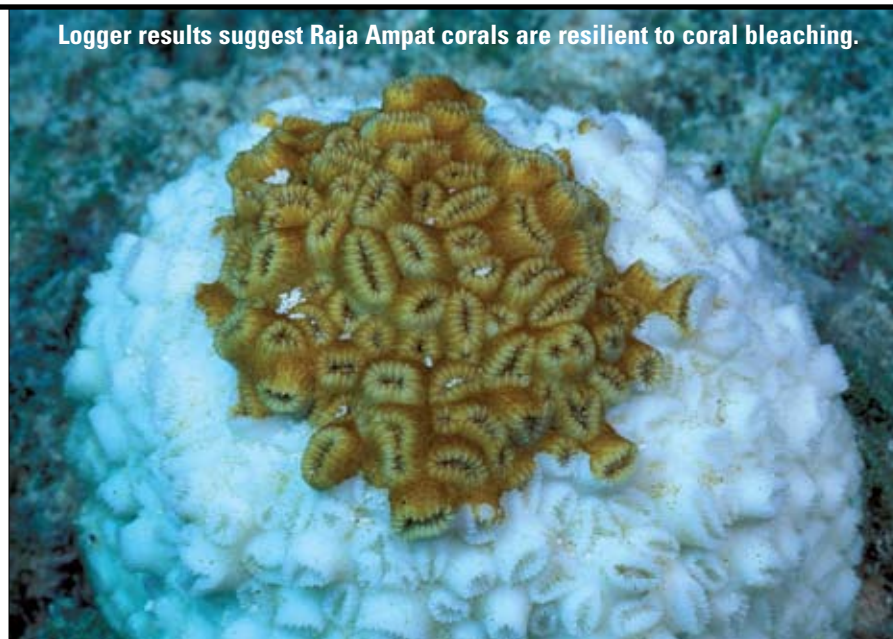
Temperature Loggers Reveal Dramatic Results

A set of 63 temperature loggers installed across the Bird's Head Seascape have revealed that the coral reefs of the Seascape, especially in the Raja Ampat Archipelago, are exposed to a dramatic range of temperatures. By continuously recording sea temperatures every 15 minutes, the loggers, which were purposefully installed in a range of habitats with living corals (from upwelling-exposed points to sun-soaked shallow lagoons), have revealed a whopping 15.7°C range in temperatures (19.3-35.0°C, averaging 29.1°C). These results suggest that Raja Ampat corals (and their associated zooxanthellae) tolerate a wide range of temperature, which should confer maximum resiliency in the face of global climate change. By comparison, corals in the Cendrawasih Bay area of the Bird's Head are exposed to a much narrower range of temperatures (26.5-31.5°C, averaging 29.5°C), which might make these reefs more susceptible to climate change.

EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC SEASCAPE

IUCN Red List Assessment of Eastern Tropical Pacific Fishes

In May, a group of world experts on Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) fish from more than 10 countries met in Panama to review the conservation status of ETP fish species and determine the risk of extinction according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.



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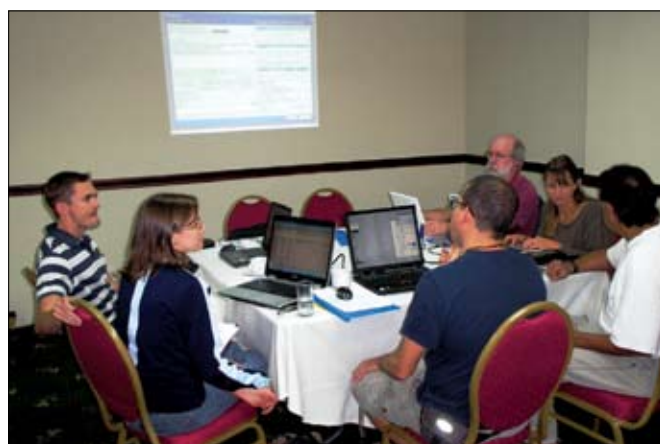
The group of experts reviewed 676 species and recommended that 103 species should be categorized as Threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable). This workshop is part of the Global Marine Species Assessment (GMSA), the first complete review of the conservation status of every marine vertebrate species, and of selected invertebrates and plants. The effort began in late 2005. The GMSA is based in the Department of Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University and supported by organizations like IUCN and Conservation International.

SULU-SULAWESI SEASCAPE

Connectivity Studies in the SSS

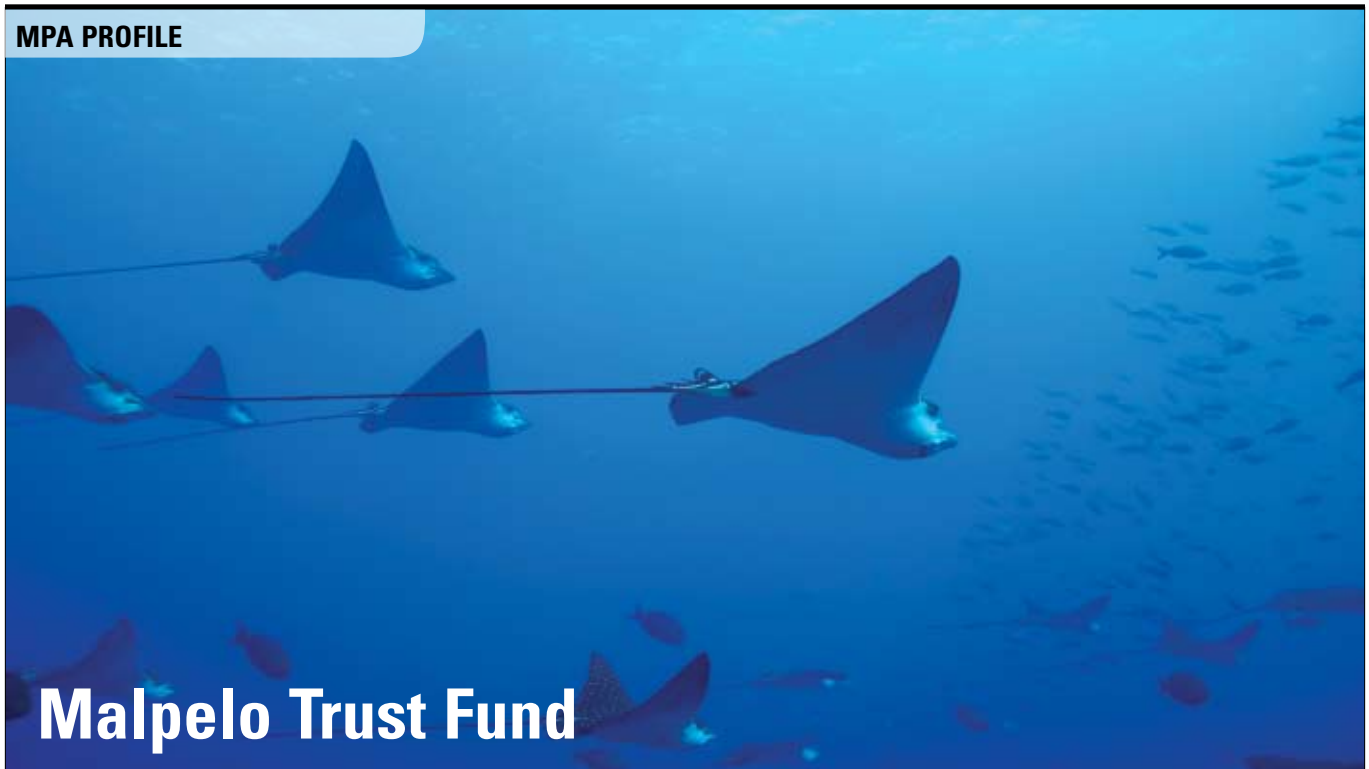
Researchers from the University of the Philippines OceanBio Laboratory and the Marine Science Institute have studied larval dispersal along Cagayan Ridge and Eastern Palawan. Preliminary results show that the highest fish-egg and larval densities are found in Cagayancillo and Tubbataha, and in the area of the Balabac Strait. These connectivity studies will allow CI scientists and partners to further define and improve a network of MPAs in the Balabac Strait Marine

Biodiversity Conservation Corridor.



© MARCO QUIESADA

Red List Workshop of ETPS Fishes.



Malpelo Trust Fund

Colombia's Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary is one of the core MPAs in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape. Its waters support high concentrations of pelagic fish, especially sharks, marine mammals, and sea turtles. In addition to steep walls and rocky pinnacles, the Sanctuary contains important coral formations. The island is also home to a colony of more than 40,000 masked boobies (*Sula granti*) – the largest such congregation in the world.

Until recently, Malpelo Foundation had to struggle to secure short-term

funding from national and international sources for priority elements of the Sanctuary's Management Plan, and the Colombian government did its best to maintain, at considerable expense, regular patrols of what recently became the world's ninth largest fully non-extractive marine reserve.

Happily, the situation has changed. During the past year, Malpelo Foundation, CI, the Colombian Navy, and the Colombian Environmental Action Fund joined forces to forge a Trust Fund, created through a debt-for-nature swap with matching funds from the Global Conservation Fund (GCF) that will underwrite core management costs of the Malpelo Sanctuary. These costs include enforcement with the ARC Sula patrol boat, scientific research and monitoring to better understand and track the Sanctuary's ecological conditions over time; building the capacity of site managers, and raising environmental awareness with education, communication, and outreach campaigns.

(Above) White-spotted eagle rays, *Aetobatus narinari*, glide through the waters around Malpelo. (Right) CI partners work together on shark tagging efforts around Malpelo.

© SCOTT HENDERSON



Ayau's People Pledge to Stop Hunting and Eating Turtles

After an intensive advocacy campaign by Conservation International (CI), the communities of Raja Ampat Island's Ayau District in the Bird's Head Seascope, have committed to stopping their consumption of turtle meat during their Christmas festivities. They have requested that CI assist them in sourcing a replacement for the prized turtle meat and help them become stewards of protected turtles. The Ayaus envision themselves as an example for other communities who consume turtles in Raja Ampat to stop hunting and eating these charismatic species.

With a population of 1,996, Ayau people are major consumers of turtle eggs and meats in Raja Ampat, especially during religious and adat (traditional) events.

They poached the turtles from local turtle nesting sites on Sayang and Piai Islands. Based on counts of carapaces found on Piai and Sayang islands, CI estimates that in 2005 more than 100 green turtles were poached, and between April and December 2006, 91 turtles were poached. The actual numbers may be higher, and no data are available on the numbers of eggs taken from nests.

Recently the government of Raja Ampat Regency declared Sayang and Piai Islands as one of seven local MPAs. These commitments on the part of the government and the Ayau community are a positive step toward protecting the sea turtle populations of the Bird's Head Seascope.

(Below) A green sea turtle, *Chelonia mydas*. (Right) The Ayau people pledge to stop hunting and eating turtles.

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