

Leatherback sea turtles are headed toward extinction in the Pacific.

Drift gillnets entangle and drown Pacific leatherbacks.

In 2001, The National Marine Fisheries Service established the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area to protect sea turtles from August to November when they migrate through our Pacific waters. The closure has been working. Not one leatherback has been reported killed since 2001.

In August 2007, NMFS plans to reopen the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area despite there being no changes in fishing techniques or improvement in the plight of leatherbacks.



Photo: pbs.org

If we want other countries to protect leatherbacks, we must ensure our own fisheries catch as few as possible.

What can you do?

- Write NOAA today to save Pacific leatherback sea turtles:

Dr. William Hogarth,
 Director, NOAA Fisheries
 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3
 Silver Spring, MD 20910
 bill.hogarth@noaa.gov

Ask him to keep the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area in place.

- Protect sea turtles and your health: swordfish and thresher sharks, the target of the drift gillnet fishery, are both on the FDA warning list for high mercury content.

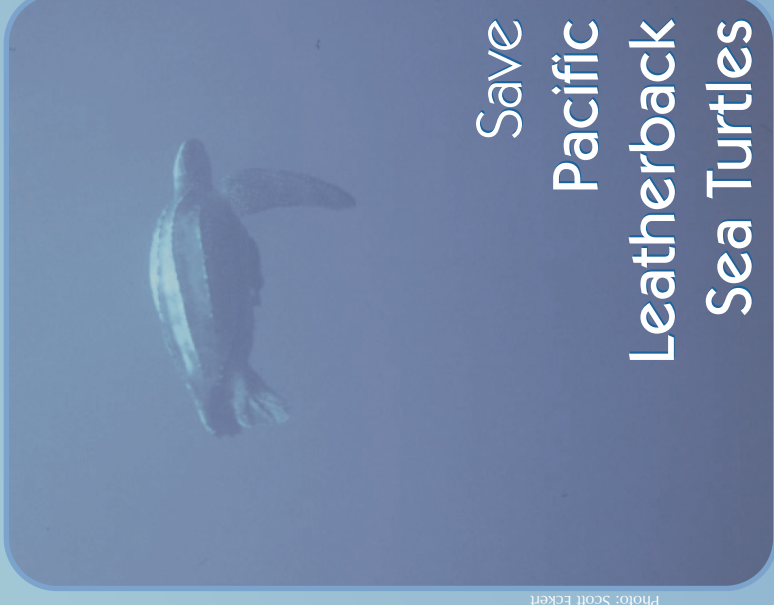


Photo: Scott Ecken

Save Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtles from Drift Gillnets



U.S. Pacific Offices

Juneau 175 S. Franklin St., Suite 418 Juneau, AK 99801 907-586-4050	Monterey 99 Pacific St., Suite 575C Monterey, CA 93940 831-643-9266	Portland 4189 S.E. Division St., North Suite Portland, OR 97202 503-234-4552
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Pacific leatherbacks are in serious trouble.
They will go extinct in our lifetime if current trends continue.

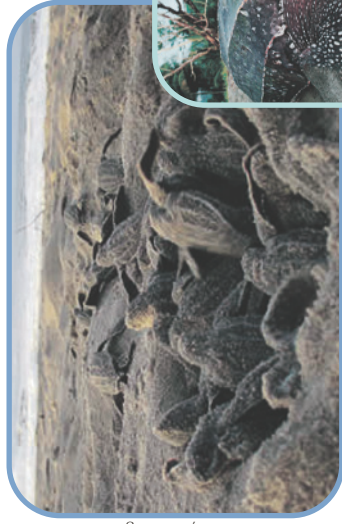


Photo: Suzanne R. Livingstone, University of Glasgow

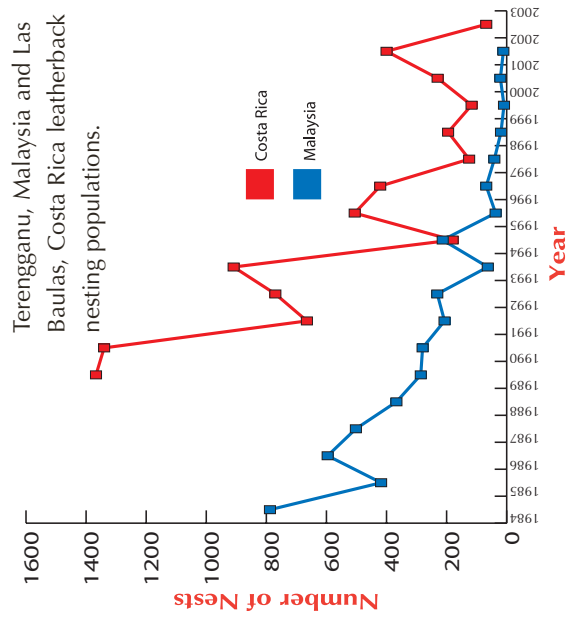


Photo: Smithsonian

"The Pacific [leatherback] population is so low now that killing any turtle makes a difference."

Peter Dutton
NMFS leatherback expert

Eastern and western Pacific populations of leatherback sea turtles have declined by 95% since 1980.



From: Sleyemmark et al. 1996, J. Spotila & F. Palodino, pers. comm. and Department of Fisheries, Terengganu, Malaysia.

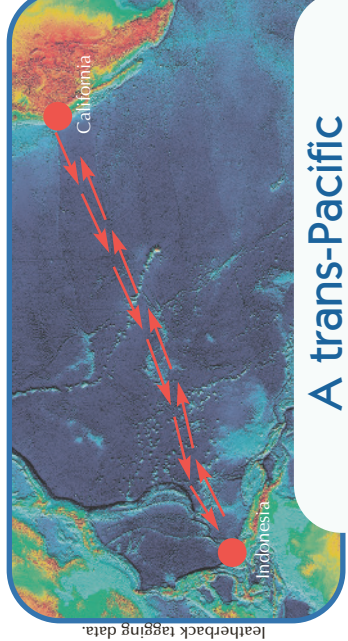


Illustration based on TOPP and NOAA leatherback tagging data.

A trans-Pacific migration

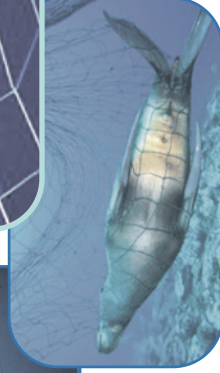
Leatherbacks migrate 6,000 miles from Indonesia to the U.S. West Coast in search of the abundant food in the rich California Current.

The Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area protects these unique turtles as they migrate through our waters each summer and fall.

A bycatch disaster...

The drift gillnet fishery for swordfish and thresher shark kills not only sea turtles, but also thousands of some of the most charismatic and ecologically important animals in the California Current.

For every 2 swordfish caught, the fishery discards 5 ocean sunfish and 3 blue sharks. In 2004, drift gillnetters discarded 1.4 animals for every one they kept.



Total estimated bycatch in the CA/OR gillnet fishery from 1994-2005	
Dolphins	3682
Seals & sea lions	1734
Whales	372
Leatherback sea turtles	164
Loggerhead sea turtles	92

"The economic impact of an increase in drift gillnet effort is likely to differ little from zero."

NMFS Environmental Assessment

Drift gillnets catch sea turtles, ocean sunfish, sea lions, and many other large ocean animals. Photos: NOAA and Seawatch.