

PRESS RELEASE

Communication campaign on marine turtle conservation in Quang Tri province

In response to International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and with an aim to raising awareness, knowledge and calling for action of local communities to protect marine turtles and their habitats, on 20 -21 March 2010 at Hai An commune, Hai Lang district, Quang Tri province, IUCN – The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Viet Nam has collaborated with Sub-Department of Aquaculture Resources Protection at Quang Tri province to organize communication campaign on marine turtle conservation.

Some activities of the campaign have included:

- Exhibition on pictures, films, material documents on marine turtles and their importance to marine biodiversity with the participation of local fishermen who were trained and became project volunteers.
- Music performance, sport competition of high school students in support of marine turtles conservation.
- Cycling for environment and broadcasting on local media such as local radio, village notice board.
- Cleaning the beach at Hai An commune, Hai Lang district, Quang Tri province with the participation of 400 students from Hai An Secondary School, 100 fishermen along Quang Tri coastal line, volunteers from Monitoring Programme on Turtle Egg-laying Areas and representatives of local authorities.

Marine turtle is one of the most long lasting animals in the earth. It has existed for almost 200 millions year, longer than dinosaur and been well adaptive to climate change. It has been recognized that so far only seven types of turtles have remained to existence at the global level, five of them have been seen at Viet Nam coastal areas and been in danger of extinction.

Marine turtle conservation in Viet Nam has been presented in Law on Aquaculture Resources Protection 1989, Decision 48/CP and international law (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species - CITES). Moreover, Viet Nam has signed MOU on marine turtle conservation and protection in South East Asia in September 1999 and signed MOU on conservation of marine turtles and their habitats at India Ocean and South East Asia in July 2001. In March 2004, Viet Nam ratified Action Plan on Marine Turtle Conservation in Viet Nam by 2010 with 70 prioritized activities to protect and manage a group of marine animals (marine turtles) and their habitats.

Quang Tri is a central coastal province with 75 km coast line, among which 67,5 km coast line are white sandy beaches where are suitable with egg-laying of marine turtle. Especially in 2005 – 2006, *Demochelys Coriacea* (Rua Da) appeared in this area (one of the most extincted turtle in Viet Nam). Rua Da has heavy weight, normally lays eggs in coastal areas of Hai An commune, Hai Lang district and in Trieu Lang commune, Trieu Phong district.

"Protecting egg laying areas of marine turtle is one of the most priorities of IUCN during implementing Action Plan on conservation of marine turtle in Viet Nam. Quang Tri coastal line is one of prioritized areas for above mentioned conservation activities and is the place where Rua Da has returned to lay the eggs. IUCN has started conservation activities of marine turtles and their habitats at Quang Tri province since

2007 and has organized 10 training programmes on protecting and saving marine turtle, raising awareness and consciousness for 500 local fishermen, secondary teachers and related provincial authorities on marine turtle in particular and marine conservation in general. A volunteer group was set up to protect marine turtles and egg laying area. This campaign is aimed to send the message widely and impressively to the public” said Ms. Bui Thi Thu Hien – Marine and Coastal Resources Programme Manager – IUCN.

In additions to implementing programme activities, Quang Tri television station has been invited to participate in different activities to provide media support. IUCN and Sub-Department of Aquaculture Resources Protection in Quang Tri province expect that good impression and memories will remain to the public through clean beaches and communications messages. It is hoped that with provided knowledge and the above awareness raising activities, we all together will protect marine turtle for a balance and beautiful ocean.

IUCN would like to express sincere thanks to US Fish and Wildlife Services for financial and technical support to IUCN and Quang Tri province in the joint efforts to project marine turtle – especially some remaining Rua Da at Quang Tri beach.

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practices.

IUCN is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

IUCN’s work is supported by more than 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. The Union’s headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1993, Viet Nam became a state member of the IUCN and the IUCN Viet Nam Country Office was established in Hanoi. IUCN has been working with many partners on a variety of environment initiatives and sustainable development. These include government agencies, local and international NGOs, donors and research institutions.

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