

A Need For Holistic Initiatives In Sea Turtle Conservation

Faculty of Environmental Studies, ENVS 3310 Tropical Conservation, York University

Yana Pikulak

Abstract

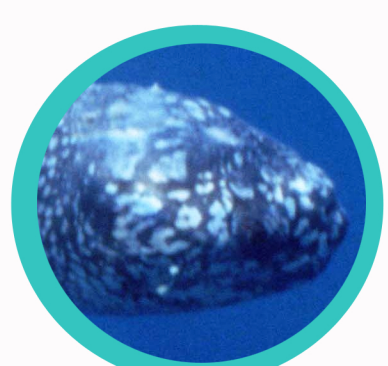
Sea turtles are an integral part of marine ecosystems. Using Tortuguero, Costa Rica as a reference point, poaching is analyzed from a cultural perspective, and focus is placed on education and ecotourism initiatives. While these initiatives are important, they present fragmented approaches that do not necessarily account for social complexities. Thus, there is a need for holistic approaches which consider such complexity while simultaneously building economic stability without jeopardizing local livelihoods and vulnerable ecosystems.

Why Sea Turtles/Why Costa Rica?

- High biodiversity rates of sea turtles in Costa Rica
- Each species contributes a specific feature to the maintenance of a healthy marine ecosystem.



Green



Leatherback



Olive Ridley



Hawksbill



Loggerhead



Pacific Green

Research

- Why are sea turtles integral to ecosystems?
- What role does turtle poaching play in social and cultural contexts in Costa Rica?
- How effective are education and ecotourism initiatives in sea turtle conservation?
- What can be done to increase effectiveness of conservation efforts?

Methods

Historical and Cultural Context



Archie Carr, Tortuguero



Map of Costa Rica

- Sea turtle poaching rooted in Costa Rican history and culture

Present Poaching Issue

- Demand for sea turtle products in international markets
- Lack of strong government enforcement (local and international)

Education and Ecotourism Initiatives

- Benefits and downfalls of education initiatives
- Benefits and downfalls of ecotourism initiatives
- Conflict amongst parties

Results

- Long history and culture of turtle poaching in Costa Rica
- Poaching presents a complex issue that involves factors such as government, culture, economy, and international demands
- Education and ecotourism initiatives, although extremely beneficial and necessary, present fragmentation

Conclusion

- There is a need for holistic initiatives in addition to fragmentations, and a stronger consideration of different parties and aspects involved
- There must also be improvement in cooperation and communication amongst all parties involved, and a more active role in government