

Conservation of Endangered Sea Turtles

Golden Key Universiti Putra Malaysia (GKUPM) has implemented a number of conservation initiatives to help save endangered sea turtles. Chapter leaders, student members and alumni volunteered in the Sea Turtle Tagging and Nesting Research Project set up by the **Turtle Research and Rehabilitation Group (TRRG)**. The volunteers travelled to the beautiful Chagar Hutang Beach on Redang Island and participated in a week long conservation program. The undergraduates were also exposed to the natural flora and fauna. Finding themselves without network coverage, the students learned to adapt to nature.



The team was required to carry out daily patrol duties including excavation and detection of natural predators such as fire ants, ghost crabs and monitor lizards. During the patrol, the team marked all nests with respective codes and recorded signs of natural predator attack. Hatchlings found in excavated sites were removed from the nest and released into the sea at night. This improved their chances of growing and maturing into fully grown turtles.



Witnessing a female turtle lay her eggs requires patience. On the fourth night, the team was rewarded when the first turtle came to shore to contribute to its species' survival. First, a mother turtle needs to find a suitable location for a nest. She then conducts a series of processes including body pitting, digging the egg chamber, depositing the egg, covering the egg chamber and sandbathing. When the tasks are completed, she returns to the sea. Some mother turtles take the whole night just to create a suitable nest!

Every year **GKUPM supports TRRG with a donation of RM 1000** and sends volunteers to participate in the Sea Turtle Tagging and Nesting Research Project. In order to raise funds, GKUPM conducts a Car Wash and Donation Drive at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Dedicated members willingly contribute their time and energy to wash cars to raise funds for the turtle conservation project. The chapter also helps TRRG to collect signatures for the "Say No to Turtle Eggs" pledge. This pledge can be signed online through the TRRG website.

Participating in the Sea Turtle Tagging and Nesting Research Project really is a once in a lifetime opportunity. GKUPM would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have supported and assisted in this program.