

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Lepidochelys olivacea in Appendix I

B. PROPONENT

Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING DATA

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Reptilia

1.2 Testudines

1.3 Cheloniidae

1.4 Lepidochelys olivacea (Eschholtz, 1829)

1.5 Common names: Ridley (English)

Bastardschildkröte (German)

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution: A circumglobal species, present in tropical regions of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Typically nests on mainland beaches; there is little nesting on the islands of the Indian Ocean or in southeast Asia or Oceania, and no nesting in the Caribbean.

2.2 Population: The number of known breeding places is still relatively high, each of them harbouring a small number of females (ca. 1,000); as a rule, the population is declining, many former breeding places are no longer frequented by the Ridley at all. A compilation of the population data available is given in Groombridge (1982: 210-213).

2.3 Habitat: The species appears to forage mainly in tropical neritic waters (further offshore than the Caretta caretta), where individuals may dive deep to feed on benthic crustaceans, or float over deeper waters feeding on crustaceans and on larger planktonic organisms that may be encountered.

2.4 Migrations: There is evidence that some groups make moderately extensive post-nesting migrations, in the east Pacific, for example, from nest sites in Mexico and other parts of central America southward to feeding grounds off Ecuador.

3. Threat data

- 3.1 Direct threat to the population: The major threats to Ridley populations have been identified as commercial harvest of adults, incidental catch in shrimp trawls and harvest of eggs from nest beaches. These factors are of differing significance in different areas, although some populations (e.g. in Mexico) are affected by all three.

The Ridley is the economically most important sea turtle in Mexico, and the primary target for both legal and illegal fisheries due to the large aggregations found in the breeding season. It is estimated that at least 2,000,000 Olive Ridleys were landed in Mexico in the five years up to 1969. During this period it was common practice to utilize only the skin of the neck, shoulder and limbs for the hide trade. European and Japanese leather manufacturers having "discovered" turtle leather in the mid-1960s, the remainder of the animal was discarded. (For further remarks also see Groombridge 1982: 215-217).

- 3.2 Habitat destruction: Similar as in the case of Chelonia mydas.
- 3.3 Indirect threat: Similar as in the case of Chelonia mydas.
- 3.4 Threat especially connected with migrations: Similar as in the case of Chelonia mydas.

4. Protection status and needs

- 4.1 National protection status: Similar to that of Chelonia mydas. - Also cf. Groombridge 1982: 217-218)
- 4.2 International protection status: The Ridley is listed in Appendix I of the Washington Convention, about which Japan has entered a reservation.
- 4.3 Additional protection needs: Similar to those of Chelonia mydas. - Also cf. Groombridge 1982: 218.

5. Range states

Angola, Australia, Benin, Burma, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, France (New Caledonia), French Guiana, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India (including the Andaman Is., Lakshadweeps and Nicobar Is.), Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Panama, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Is., South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, USA (Hawaiian Is.), Venezuela, Zaire and international waters.

6. Comments from range states

None

7. Additional remarks

The Ridley is listed as being "endangered" in the IUCN Red Data Book of 1982.

8. References

Bustard, H.R. and C.S. Kar (1981): Annual nesting of the Pacific Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) in Orissa, India. - Brit. J. Herpetol. 6:

Kar, C.S. (1980): The Gahirmatha turtle rookery along the coast of Orissa, India. - Marine Turtle Newsletter No. 15: 2-3

For further publications also see proposal concerning Chelonia mydas.