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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Too hot to hatch for baby sea turtles?**

A group of researchers from Sea Turtle Foundation will be on Milman Island in northern Queensland throughout January to uncover how climate change may impact on sea turtles.

Sea turtles from as far away as Indonesia and Vanuatu are now converging on beaches all around northern Queensland for their annual nesting season. But the nesting turtles need to find beaches with the right environmental conditions, including sand temperature, if we are to see swarms of turtle hatchlings running down our beaches in a few months time.

“Turtle hatchling gender is determined by sand temperature during egg incubation”, said David Roe, Project Manager for Sea Turtle Foundation. “Cooler sands produce male turtles and warmer sands produce females. If the sand is too hot the eggs will not hatch at all.”

“Rising sand temperatures from global warming could cause future generations of sea turtles to have insufficient males to maintain population numbers.”

“Rising sea levels and increased heights of storm surges also pose problems for sea turtles. If nests are swamped with sea water the eggs may not hatch.”

“Sea turtles are already seriously under threat. They choke on marine debris, they are losing their nesting beaches to developments, they get caught in fishing gear and they are hit by boats. Climate change could prove to be the final straw that means we lose sea turtles in our oceans forever.”

Scientists have been studying the turtles of Milman Island for the past 15 years. Long-term research enables turtle managers to react with informed management plans before sea turtle populations reach the point of no return.

The research team includes indigenous rangers from the Injinoo community who will be trained in sea turtle research, conservation and management. One turtle will be fitted with a satellite transmitter so her return journey from nesting beach to feeding grounds can be followed.

Sea Turtle Foundation has partnered with the QLD Department of Environment and Resource Management, Cape York Sustainable Futures, Sea Swift shipping company, Project AWARE and Sydney Aquarium Conservation Fund on this project. To learn more about Sea Turtle Foundation’s program of research, education and action go to [www.seaturtlefoundation.org](http://www.seaturtlefoundation.org)

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Images and further information is available from David Roe, Sea Turtle Foundation  
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### **About Sea Turtle Foundation**

Sea Turtle Foundation is a non-profit, non-government group working to protect and conserve sea turtles through research, education, awareness and action. Learn more at [www.seaturtlefoundation.org](http://www.seaturtlefoundation.org).