



Sea Turtle Foundation Ltd
PO Box 1190, Townsville, Qld, 4810
Phone/fax: (07) 4721 2699
www.seaturtlefoundation.org

MEDIA RELEASE – 2 SEP 2008

Indigenous hunting of marine turtles in Australia: conservation challenge or opportunity?

Free public seminar with Prof. Helene Marsh, Tropical Environment Studies & Geography, JCU

When: 2pm 7 September 2008 - Threatened Species Day

Where: Townsville Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre (next to ReefHQ).

Turtles and dugongs have great cultural significance for the Indigenous coastal peoples of northern Australia, who have harvested them for thousands of years. Scientific evidence suggests that turtles may be over-harvested by some communities and some Traditional Owners share the scientists' concerns.

According to world renowned turtle expert, based at James Cook University, Prof. Helene Marsh, "there is time to work with Indigenous communities throughout northern Australia to develop community-based management of their harvests as advocated by the 'National Partnership Approach' and the Traditional Use Resource Management Agreement being developed in the Great Barrier Reef Region."

Prof. Marsh thinks that the challenge is management plan implementation - which will require long-term investment in supportive policies, employment, capacity building, and infrastructure in the remote regions of tropical Australia.

"While implementation of management plans is certainly challenging, it will also create valuable employment opportunities such as community-based ranger programs that will not only help protect Australia's tropical biological and cultural diversity but could also help address social problems in some communities," she said.

Come to the public seminar this Sunday and take the opportunity to hear about and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing northern communities.

This seminar is the first in a series of three presented as part of the lead up to the 29th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, which will be held for the first time in Australia in Brisbane, 17-19 February 2009 (www.turtlesbrisbane2009.org).

The seminars are proudly sponsored by the Townsville-based not-for-profit organisation Sea Turtle Foundation that works to protect sea turtles and their habitats and migration routes through education, research support and advocacy (www.seaturtlefoundation.org).

For more information, please contact:

Gitte Kragh

Phone: (07) 4721 2699 / 0423 334 136

Email: gitte.kragh@seaturtlefoundation.org



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Sea Turtle Biology
and Conservation
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Brisbane, Australia