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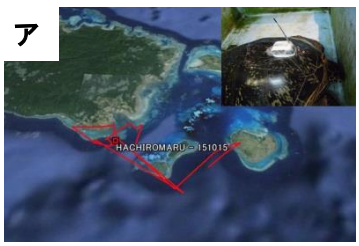

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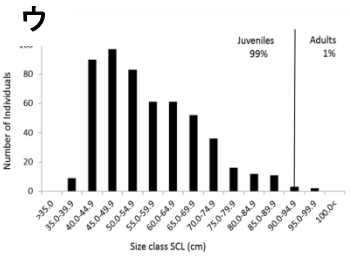

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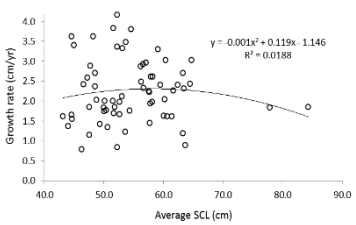

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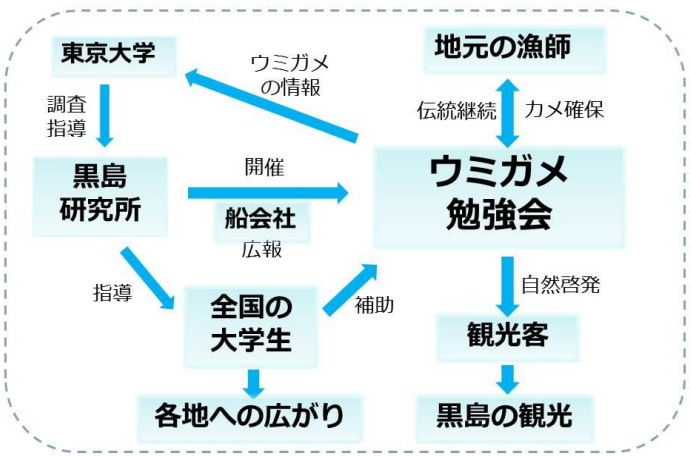

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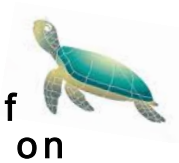
Educational Activities on the Protection of Rare Species Through Ecological Studies on Sea Turtles



Katsufumi Sato (Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute, The University of Tokyo)
Kuroshima Research Station, Sea Turtle Association of Japan

Background and Objectives

Countless studies and research on sea turtles are being conducted, but the results of these studies are not communicated to the general public. Compared to the sandy beaches that are the nesting areas for sea turtles, the field is lagging behind in studies conducted in the sea, where sea turtles spend the large part of their lives. Hence, by conducting studies on sea turtles together with general tourists, we aim to elucidate their ecological conditions and widely disseminate existing results of studies to the general public.

Educational Activities

Organizing Study Seminar on Sea Turtles

a. We organized an event on environmental conservation for tourists visiting Kuroshima by conducting tagging studies on sea turtles.
Special features for participants. Sustained effects through gifts of a washcloth containing sea turtle measurement records, and a notification postcard for when the sea turtles are sighted again.

b. Explanations about the ecological conditions of sea turtles, and how to distinguish them from tortoises. Conducting the activity together with university students from across Japan also contributes to the nurturing of future generations.

c. Attaching tags to the turtles' legs, and measurements before release into the sea. The tags identify individual sea turtles, and enable the researchers to find out how much they have grown in the number of years from the release to the time they are sighted again.

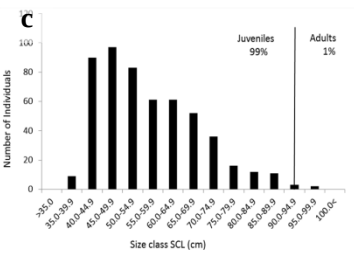
d. Movement to the beach, and release of sea turtles. This marked the end of the study seminar, and the start of the tagging study.

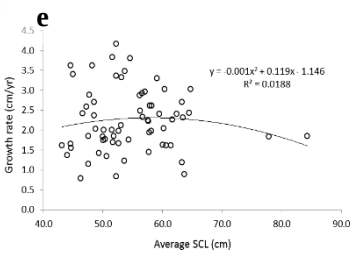
Research Activities

Shedding light on the ecology of sea turtles

a. Conducted satellite tracking survey on green turtles.
Observed that they stayed in the seas of the Yaeyama Islands without long-distance movements.

b. Mating of green turtles.
Explored the mating of sea turtles, which little is known about, and conducted a study to identify the seas that they mate in.

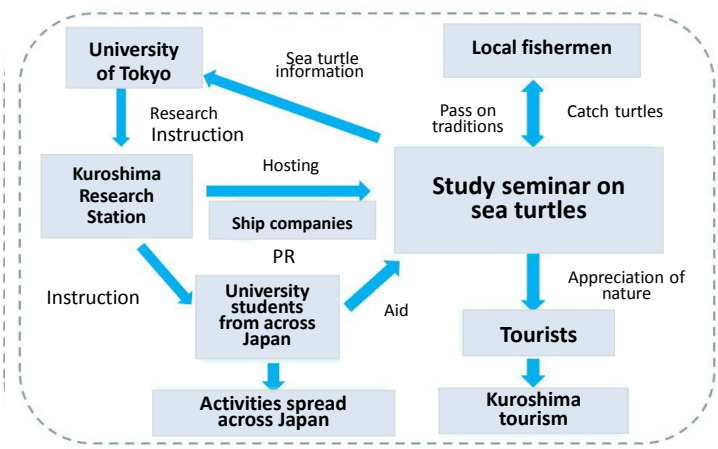




c. Composition of carapace length for green turtles.
There are many young sea turtles in the Yaeyama Islands, and grown turtles make up only 1% of all the turtles. These seas are the breeding grounds for sea turtles until they become grown turtles.

d. Growth rate of green turtles.
Based on the results of the tagging study, it was found that the length of the carapace of the turtles grew by 2.2 cm in one year, on the average. Depending on the individual, there were differences in growth ranging from several millimeters to more than 4 cm.

Effects of study seminar on sea turtles



Activity Results and Outlook

● The study seminar was held from July 2015 to the long holiday season in May 2016 for 80 days in total, and a total of 1,332 people participated in the activities.
The number of participants increased from the previous year by as much as 120% from 1,082 people. In addition to serving as educational purposes, the event also contributed to the tourism industry of Kuroshima.
● Obtained green turtles through traditional fishing methods
Contributed to the continued survival of fishing methods that are on the decline.
● 23 research students from the Kuroshima Research Station participated in the study seminar and survey on sea turtles.
Nurturing researchers of the future, and expanding and spreading activities.
● Through satellite tracking, it was found that the sea turtles stay in Yaeyama.
Yaeyama is a feeding ground for sea turtles.
● Valuable records were kept on the mating of sea turtles.
● Data was obtained on the size distribution and growth of green turtles in Yaeyama.