

## MARINE TURTLES

Review: The Committee reviewed the background, justification and objectives of this programme, as a result of which the following amendments were suggested to the Draft Plan of Work.

1. Title: Marine Turtles Conservation and Management
2. Background and Justification:

The marine turtles of the South Pacific are a valuable source of protein for the island peoples. Unfortunately, due to population increases predatory pressures upon this valuable animal have resulted in serious depletion of existing stocks and the Pacific population of marine turtles has now reached a critical level.

It is obvious that "total protection" is not only impracticable but also undesirable as such action would deprive protein-poor people of an important source of this material.

3. Objectives:

To conduct an initial survey into existing turtle stocks within the area of the Territories; to establish a programme for the re-stocking of selected and suitable depleted areas with juvenile turtles; to make a preliminary study of the potential, in selected territories, for turtle ranching; to formulate suitable general protective legislation capable of being adopted by the territories.

After general discussion,

### COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED:

1. that the services of the Marine Turtle Consultants be utilized for:
  - (a) Initial overall rapid assessment of existing turtle stocks within the region;
  - (b) follow-up programmes consisting of development surveys concentrated on individual promising territorial sites. It was felt that not

more than three, and preferably two, sites only be selected.

In this connection the claim by Western Samoa who were already operating a Green Turtle hatchery; and by the Trust Territory who had had valuable experience in Hawksbill rearing, should be given serious consideration and a certain priority.

2. That SPIFDA, within its budget, should make funds available for the inter-territorial transportation of turtle-eggs where it was desirable to ensure that eggs in remote, unprotected areas should be given the maximum chance of successful hatching.
3. That the agency should make funds available for the inter-territorial transportation of turtle eggs from remote unprotected areas to established regional turtle-hatcheries.
4. That co-operation between territories on the question of egg-collecting and hatchling distribution be encouraged and also on the distribution of related information.
5. That a standard turtle-tagging programme be instituted and that the Agency fund the reward on returned tags. The reward to be the equivalent of US\$ 5.00 in line with general world-wide turtle tagging programmes.
6. That all territories be encouraged to introduce protective legislation aimed at assisting present turtle stocks to increase.