

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



LANG TENGAH TURTLE WATCH
TANJONG JARA RESORT

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SUMMARY



Green turtle hatchling.

- In 2017, Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort was rated 4.81/5 for guest satisfaction.
- We saved 7,507 turtle eggs from going to the market, releasing 5,414 endangered green turtle hatchlings and 73 critically endangered painted terrapins.
- 100% of surveyed guests will recommend for their friends to come and visit Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort.
- 79.38% of guests surveyed said they would return to Tanjong Jara Resort just so that they can visit the turtle hatchery again.
- 6.32% of guests surveyed were first-time visitors and had stayed at Tanjong Jara Resort because they had been recommended to, specifically to experience the turtle conservation activities on offer.
- We removed 785.5 kg of rubbish from Tahu Tiga Beach, which is the beach adjacent to Tanjong Jara Resort. This was done with the help of 89 volunteers from the local community.

MEET OUR TEAM



BILL MATTHEWS
Project Coordinator

Bill studied a Bachelor of Science at Monash University, graduating with a double major in Conservation Ecology and Zoology. Former intern at Lang Tengah Turtle Watch in 2015.

RIFQAH AHMAD ROSTAM
Research Assistant

Rifqah has a degree in Marine Science from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She interned with Lang Tengah Turtle Watch in 2014 and returned in 2016 to run the beach cleanup event at Tanjong Jara. This year, she returned to help manage Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort.



MOLLY MANWILL
Research Assistant

From England, Molly had a degree in Ecology and Conservation from the University of Sussex. She interned on Lang Tengah in 2014 and decided to come back and work with Lang Tengah Turtle Watch for five months in 2017.



MILES THOMSON
Assistant Research Officer

From Melbourne, Australia, he studied Environmental Management at Deakin University. He originally joined the team as a research assistant intern, however, stayed on as a staff member and will be returning again in 2018.



TAHLIA KINRADE
Research Assistant Intern

From Brisbane Australia, Tahlia studied at the University of Queensland. Tahlia joined the team with an interest in childhood education and helped with the implementation of educational games for local kids.



ANIRUTH APROI
Research Assistant Intern

From Kedah, Malaysia. Aniruth just completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Science from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.



MARGAUX BEE
Research Assistant Intern

From France with experience in studying several protected marines species including the loggerhead turtle.



BRITTNEY LAWRENCE
Research Assistant Intern

From Melbourne, Australia. Brittney is currently in the final year of her degree in Wildlife and Conservation Biology from Deakin University.



NEST INSPECTIONS



Our Research Assistant, Rifqah, checking the health of a turtle egg.

We regularly check our turtle nests after 37 days and 45 days, respectively, for green turtles and painted terrapins nests. After the first nest inspection, we will check green turtle nests every three days and every five days for painted terrapins nests. Nest inspections are important for identifying the development state of the eggs, as well as any potential problems such as the spread of fungus or predation.



Guests joining a nest check to learn more about turtle conservation.

Every week we pass the daily schedule of our nest checks to the resort. There is also a schedule at reception, so the guests will always be informed about our activities. Guests can come over to our hatcheries and observe how we do our routine nest inspections. It's a very interactive and informative experience for the guests as our team will explain the incubation process, life cycles, biological, ecological and behavioural details of turtles, while we do our nest inspection. Guests will also get a chance to see turtle eggs and if they are lucky, they might get to see hatchlings.

HATCHLING RELEASES

Conducting the nest inspections also allows us to ascertain the developmental phase of the hatchlings, and therefore when they will be ready to make their way out to sea.

Once we know that hatchlings are ready to be released that evening, we will contact the staff at reception, so they will notify guests of the release. Hatchling releases always happen at 10 p.m.

At 10 p.m. when all the guests arrive at our Visitors' Hut, we will give a briefing about the release, the do's and don'ts. This ensures a smooth release, minimising any risk of unnecessary stress to the hatchlings.

The release location is imperative to ensuring the hatchlings go to sea in the most natural way possible. For this reason, the release site is located about 300 m away from any artificial light sources and increased human activity. The hatchlings and guests are taken down the beach for the releases.



A hatchling poking out of the sand, waiting for nightfall to emerge.



Guests listening to briefing.



Guests lining the runway as we release the hatchlings under red light.

In total, we managed to release:



5,414

**ENDANGERED
GREEN
TURTLE
HATCHLINGS**



73

**CRITICALLY
ENDANGERED
PAINTED
TERRAPIN
HATCHLINGS**

NEST ADOPTION PROGRAMME

This year, we continued our nest adoption program which was significantly more successful than last year. We managed to buy 83 nests, 74 of which were green turtles and nine painted terrapins nests. In total, we managed to buy 7,389 eggs, resulting in 5,369 hatchlings.

In 2016, the team managed to purchase 34 nests through the nest adoption program, resulting in the release of 2,785 hatchlings. This shows more than a two-fold increase in our nest adoption program, however, this is far from its potential capability.

The popularity of the nest adoption program meant that we had to stop accepting adoptions from guests in June in order to be able to fill the order for 2017. Following this, we supplied guests with the expression of interests sheets, where they could write down their name and email addresses, to be contacted if we start online adoptions in 2018. Over 127 guests signed up to these sheets, suggesting that in 2018 we can greatly increase our adoption program, given the appropriate facilities and funding.



Nest markers showing adopted nests.



Some of the nests adopted by Tanjong Jara Resort's guests.

This year we collaborated with five local tender holders along the Terengganu coastline. When resort guests adopt a nest, we contact tender holders, who have the rights to harvest eggs from their tendered beaches. When a turtle comes up to lay eggs, the tender holders contact us and either deliver the eggs to us, or we go and collect them.

We use the money from guests nest adoptions to purchase these eggs based on a price setup by the Department of Fisheries. After that, we incubate the eggs in our hatcheries. We also send regular updates once we start checking the nest, giving details of the developmental progress of the eggs.



A new nest after being relocated into our hatchery.

SUNNY SURAYA
LITTLE NINJAS



Eggs in the foreground thinning and close to hatching.



Hatchling in lower middle phase of development.

INSTALLATION OF THIRD HATCHERY

We started the 2017 season with our two hatcheries, however, the nest adoption programme has been far more successful than we anticipated. Halfway through the season, we had to build a third hatchery to make enough room to house all of the nests sponsored by resort guests. The third hatchery was built using donation money sponsored by resort guests along with family and friends of Lang Tengah Turtle Watch staff.



The third hatchery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BEACH CLEAN-UP

On the 15th of July, we organised a beach clean-up on Tahu Tiga, the beach next to our Tanjong Jara Site. The beach clean-up was sponsored by KOSÉ, a cosmetic skincare company as part of their Save the Blue Campaign. We managed to remove 785.5 kg of rubbish from this 3.2 km beach. This year we collected more rubbish per student now that we have refined our operations. This is something we hope to increase further in 2018.

We feel this beach clean-up is very important for the turtles, Tanjong Jara Resort and the local villagers. It is also a great way to create awareness about turtles and waste management. As we were collecting rubbish, many of the students express the desire to change their habits to generate less waste, especially by refusing single-use plastic items like straws, plastic bottles and plastic bags.



School children collecting rubbish from the beach.



School children, students, KOSÉ and our team after the beach clean-up.

THE CLEAN-UP INVOLVED:

- 12 representative from KOSÉ and the media
- 60 school children from SM Sains Dungun
- 2 school teachers
- 12 Politeknik Students
- 3 other members of the local community

SCHOOL VISIT

On the 27th of March, our team visited SK Kompleks Rantau Abang, where we gave talks about turtle conservation and recycling. We also played games to teach them about the bioaccumulation of rubbish in ecosystems and the impact it has on humans, as well as turtles.

The school visit was done as a continuation of our Learn, Evaluate, Act, Participate (LEAP) Together Programme. This programme increases school students' knowledge about human impacts on the environment. The education of the next generation is a critical step in turtle conservation. They are the ones that will shape the future of this planet and we hope to empower them with the knowledge they need to protect it.



Lang Tengah Turtle Watch staff giving a talk to local schoolchildren about turtle conservation.

THE RANGERS



From left to right – Khairul Nizar, Pok Mat, Roslin and Khairul Hamdan.

The rangers are four men from the local villages that have been employed by Lang Tengah Turtle Watch since the beginning of the Tanjong Jara Resort project. In 2016 they were trained by the Department of Fisheries on the correct protocols involved in relocating turtle nests to ensure a high hatching success rate. 2017 saw the return of our dedicated rangers, who continued their mission to protect and relocate turtle eggs before they could be taken and sold to the market.

Along with their nightly patrols of our tendered beach, the increase in the nest adoption programme also meant that several of the rangers spent more time around

the hatcheries, receiving nests from tender holders and burying them safely in our hatcheries. Their help is extremely important in maintaining our hatching success rate above the local average of 70%.

The rangers also help us with the hatchling releases to ensure that the hatchlings make it safely to the water. This is great for the guests to see local people involved and employed in conservation as it shows an encouraging outlook for the turtles in this region. This also reflects extremely well on Tanjong Jara Resort as we always mention that the rangers are also employed by the resort.

GUEST SATISFACTION

We devised a feedback form that was made available for guests to complete in our Visitors' Hut.

Our key findings from the 97 completed forms we received were as follows:

- 93.75% of returning Tanjong Jara Resort's guests surveyed said that their stay has been enhanced by the presence of the turtle hatchery.
- 100% of surveyed guests will recommend for their friends to come and visit Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort.
- 79.38% of guests surveyed said they would return to Tanjong Jara Resort just so that they can visit the turtle hatchery again.
- Lang Tengah Turtle Watch at Tanjong Jara Resort achieved an average rating of 4.81/5 with regard to the level of information divulged by our team, the management of the project and the overall experience. This is an increase on last years rating of 4.75/5.
- 16.32% of guests surveyed were first-time visitors and had visited because they were recommended to stay at Tanjong Jara Resort specifically to experience the turtle conservation activities on offer.

From these results, we can infer that our hatcheries and adoption programme has been a great attraction for guests of Tanjong Jara Resort.

Lang Tengah Turtle Watch will strive to retain our high guest satisfaction ratings throughout the 2018 season and beyond.

Common feedback suggested that guests would like additional signs around the resort to help them find the turtle hatcheries. Guests also would have liked to know more about the turtle project before coming and said they would have stayed longer had they known they could see hatchling releases. A suggested solution to this was more advertising online.

GUEST REVIEW AT TRIPADVISOR

“Absolutely Excellent!”

Reviewed 6 May 2017

“...A huge highlight is that it is on a Turtle laying beach- there is a turtle sanctuary there, called Lang Tengah that looks after the hatcheries and keeps them safe. Really lucky to be witness to some turtle babies being released during our stay!...”

“Amazing Trip to a Beautiful Resort”

Reviewed 6 September 2017

“...The Turtle Hatching Programme that the hotel have a partnership with is amazing for nature lovers and naturalists. The Lang Tengah Turtle Watch programme is well worth a visit, especially in a morning at 10 a.m. when they check the nests. The rangers will happily talk to you about their work. Turtle releases happen at 10 p.m. if there are any nests to be released. This is awesome, and we have special memories of watching two releases during our week stay here...”

“The Jewel of East Coast Malaysia”

Reviewed 12 September 2017

“...This time we were lucky to see the release of baby turtles into the sea from a sanctuary operated by the resort and run by volunteers from around the world. Another treat...”

“Still beautiful to us (Our third visit!)”

Reviewed on 18 September 2017

“Positives: We were fortunate to witness the baby turtle release at night! TJR started this joint conservatism program last year and it was quite a treat, especially for our 1 year old. [...]”

“Perfect for a Resort Gateway”

Reviewed 5 October 2017

“...We were fortunate enough to witness the release of baby turtles as part of the breeding programme at the hotel's beach. It was magical!...”

“ Chilling with the Turtles!”

Reviewed 20 October 2017

“...This is a charitable turtle conservation project which has a hatchery on the beach at the resort. It's an amazing project and if you're lucky enough to see a baby turtle release, it will be a memory forever... ”