



Republic of the Philippines
Ministry of Natural Resources
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

MNR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 33
Series of 1982

AUG 11 1982

SUBJECT: Regulations governing the collection of Marine turtle eggs in the province of Tawi-Tawi and reiterating the duties and responsibilities of Deputy Conservation Officers and Deputy Game Wardens.

To effectively implement the President's desire to conserve marine turtles as embodied in Executive Order No. 542 dated June 26, 1979, the following guidelines and regulations concerning the gathering of marine turtle eggs specifically for the residents of the province of Tawi-Tawi, who are largely dependent on marine turtle eggs for their livelihood, are hereby promulgated for strict compliance of all concerned.

1. DISPOSITION OF MARINE TURTLE EGGS

At least one Task Force Pawikan Officer shall be assigned in each municipality to insure that adequate quantity of turtle eggs are left untouched for hatching into turtles that will grow to maturity.

- 1.1 Thirty (30) percent of the eggs laid shall be reserved for preservation purposes, while ten (10) percent may be gathered and the proceeds hereof shall be given to the Tawi-Tawi Marine Turtle Conservation Foundation to be organized.
- 1.2 The remaining sixty (60) percent of the eggs may be gathered by authorized permittees under the supervision of a TFP officer, provided a municipal fee per egg gathered shall be paid to the municipality, the amount of which fee shall be determined by the Sanguniang Bayan of the municipality.

2. REQUIREMENT FOR PERMITTEES

It shall be deemed illegal for any person to gather turtle eggs without a permit. Said permit may be issued under the following conditions:

- 2.1 Applicant is a Filipino citizen and of legal age.
- 2.2 Applicant is a bonafide resident of the municipality for at least one year and a qualified voter of the same municipality.
- 2.3 Applicant has no pending criminal charges.
- 2.4 Applicant is not affiliated, directly or indirectly with the Task Force Pawikan.
- 2.5 The governor or his duly authorized representative certifies to the veracity of paragraphs 2.1 - 2.4 above, for each applicant.

3. PERMIT

The following guidelines shall be observed in the issuance of permit to gather marine turtle eggs.

- 3.1 Permit to gather turtle eggs maybe issued only by the office of the Minister thru his duly authorized representative in the municipality such as the Task Force(TFP) Personnel.
- 3.2 Permit to gather eggs shall be issued only to those who fulfill the requirements stated in paragraph 2 hereof free of charge. Only one permit per individual shall be allowed and each permit is valid only from April to December, renewable yearly.
- 3.3 The number of permits to be issued in each municipality shall be limited to a number which the estimated total number of eggs can amply supply such that the benefit from turtle eggs maybe distributed to as many people as possible without sacrificing economy of scale of operation per person. However, if in the opinion of Task Force Pawikan officer in charge of the area, the determined limit of the number of permits to be issued is less than the number of applicants, then all qualified applicants shall be subjected to a lottery to determine who among them shall be given a permit.
- 3.4 Application for permit to gather turtle eggs for the year 1982 may be made only to the end of September 1982. Permits after 1982 maybe applied for from January 2 to March 31 of each year and permits are valid only from April 1 to December 31 of the same year.

4. SCHEME OF IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Task Force Pawikan officer in charge in each municipality shall prepare a weekly schedule for turtle egg gatherers to be posted at the town hall every thursday afternoon for the succeeding week, copy furnished the key local police and military officials in the municipality. The schedule shall include among other things the following information:
 - 4.1.1 Updated list of permittees.
 - 4.1.2 Daily limit of turtle eggs to be collected by each permittee which shall be determined by the Task Force Pawikan officer assigned.
 - 4.1.3 Place and time of assembly for each day of the succeeding week to be determined by the Task Force Pawikan.
 - 4.1.4 Specific island or nesting site where turtle egg gathering will be permitted for each day of the week.
 - 4.1.5 If necessary, the deployment arrangement for each group of permittees for each day of the week.

- 4.2 The permittees shall be grouped by the Task Force Pawikan officer in charge of the municipality at a minimum of four (4) permittees per party, to be accompanied by at least one TFP personnel to the designated gathering site. Any permittee gathering turtle eggs individually outside of a group shall be considered illegal and his permit maybe withdrawn or suspended.
 - 4.3 Permittees shall endeavor to assign work equitably among the members of each groups during the egg gathering operation and then agree on the sharing of the proceeds which should preferably be divided equally among each participating permittee.
 - 4.4 Nests intended for preservation purposes as determined by the Task Force Pawikan officer concerned shall not be touched, dug nor disturbed in any manner.
 - 4.5 After every digging of each nest, the permittees are required to dump back sand into the hole and level it neatly. Neither should the surroundings be tampered nor anything be left on the ground that would obstruct the free passage of turtles in their nesting movements.
 - 4.6 After the egg collection for the day has been made, the permittees shall proceed to the designated assembly place where the eggs will be counted and necessary fees paid. A Task Force Pawikan personnel will oversee the collection and counting of turtle eggs then endorse the actual count to the Municipal Treasurer for the collection of municipal fees.
 - 4.7 Only authorized equipment for digging shall be used in the gathering operation such as probing rod ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter and 1 meter long), shovels, sand scoopers and trowels that maybe approved by the Task Force Pawikan officer assigned in the area.
 - 4.8 The municipal Treasurer shall be held responsible for the collection and safekeeping of the municipal fees which maybe paid in the form of turtle eggs or in cash.
5. DEPUTY CONSERVATION OFFICERS AND DEPUTY PARKS AND GAME WARDENS

Key local officials designated by the Office of the Minister as either Deputy Conservation Officer or Deputy Parks and Game Warden are enjoined to assist the Task Force Pawikan, enforce conservation laws, rules and regulations especially this order covering the regulated gathering of turtle eggs. For purposes of reiteration, following are the specific duties and responsibilities of the Deputy Conservation Officers and Deputy Parks and Game Warden related to the conservation of marine turtles:

- 5.1 Cause the apprehension, arrest or bringing to court,


violators of this order such as poachers and illegal gatherers and the confiscation/seizure of equipment, tools and other paraphernalia used in such instances.

- 5.2 Refer to the Task Force Pawikan or any MNR Office, cases of violations that are not specifically mentioned in this order.
- 5.3 Prevent the capture, slaughter or sale of marine turtles in their respective areas of jurisdiction. They shall also see to it that the travel within one (1) kilometer offshore of marine turtle sanding beaches is minimized if not entirely eliminated to prevent undue disturbances to nesting turtles.
- 5.4 Insure that deliberate littering or introduction of obstruction in turtle sanding beaches is prevented by passing the necessary ordinances making such activities illegal.
- 5.5 Assist BFAR personnel in the prohibition of dynamite use, chemical poisoning and other illegal fishing practices in their respective areas of responsibility.
- 5.8 Assist Task Force Pawikan Personnel in the implementation of activities related to the conservation of marine turtles.

6. PERSONNEL DEPLOYMENT

The Chairman of Task Force Pawikan is hereby authorized to deploy qualified personnel from the Office of the Minister, Task Force Pawikan, Bureau of Forest Development and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to the different municipalities concerned to effect the implementation of this order using the relevant appropriations of each of the aforementioned offices.

This Order shall take effect immediately and all orders inconsistent herewith are hereby modified accordingly.


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Minister