



SAVE TURTLE NGO

CHRÁNÍME MOŘSKÉ ŽELVY z.s /annual report 2023





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INTRODUCTION

In 2023, more than 35,500 small sea turtles (hatchlings) were released to the sea. We have also extended protection to new places. The protected areas are larger. And not just for turtles; they are bigger for all the fauna and flora that exist in these areas.

In Indonesia we protect turtles in three places. Direct protection of turtles continues on Lembata Island, in the southeastern part of the country and on Denawan Island, in southern Borneo.

We continue to educate and develop local people in the Berau region of Borneo. During 2023, we worked on materials to extend protection to two more islands in southern Borneo – Pamalikan and Matasirih. In the second half of 2023 we agreed on protection in the east of Sulawesi. The protection will start from beginning of 2024.

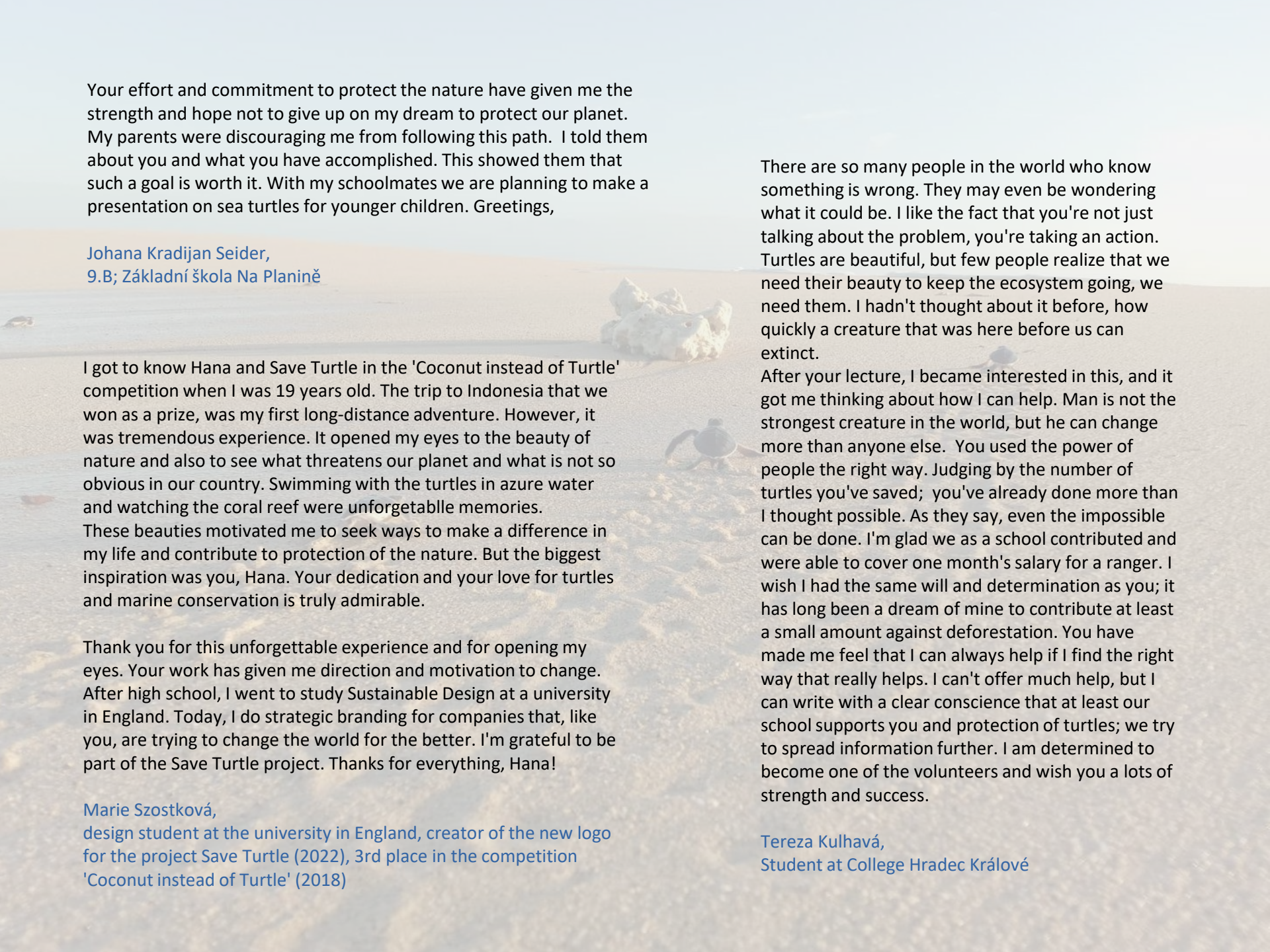
We are developing a project in Sri Lanka. Starting 2023 we are supporting a local ranger; we continue to educate and develop local people. We are working with 46 hotels, resorts and accommodation venues to provide information for tourists to visit centers that provide effective protection of sea turtles.

In the Czech Republic, we are working hard to raise awareness about the situation of sea turtles and condition of oceans. We organized 43 events for schools, 32 for public, in total 75 events in one year. I am proud of it. I believe that raising awareness will continue to have a great positive impact on improving the situation of sea turtles. We took part in seven exhibitions; I presented sea turtles on TV and radio, we published several important articles.

When I see follow-up activities of students and teachers, I am happy because I see that we inspire others. Some students get in touch right away, some let me know years later that they attended a lecture on turtles in past and are now they are studying biology at university. And that they would like to volunteer. It's been 19 years since I started protecting sea turtles. During that time, we managed to release more than 4,500,000 hatchlings; we are changing the public's view of protection, we are encouraging others to change the world around them for better future. I am so grateful for that!

Thank you very much for your help in 2023. Thank you to the rangers in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, thank you to NGO members, thank you to all the volunteers, thank you to the donors and most importantly THANK YOU for saving more and more turtles every day. I greatly appreciate the support of all of you.

Hana Vašina Svobodová
Chairwoman of Save Turtle NGO



Your effort and commitment to protect the nature have given me the strength and hope not to give up on my dream to protect our planet. My parents were discouraging me from following this path. I told them about you and what you have accomplished. This showed them that such a goal is worth it. With my schoolmates we are planning to make a presentation on sea turtles for younger children. Greetings,

Johana Kradijan Seider,
9.B; Základní škola Na Planině

I got to know Hana and Save Turtle in the 'Coconut instead of Turtle' competition when I was 19 years old. The trip to Indonesia that we won as a prize, was my first long-distance adventure. However, it was tremendous experience. It opened my eyes to the beauty of nature and also to see what threatens our planet and what is not so obvious in our country. Swimming with the turtles in azure water and watching the coral reef were unforgettable memories. These beauties motivated me to seek ways to make a difference in my life and contribute to protection of the nature. But the biggest inspiration was you, Hana. Your dedication and your love for turtles and marine conservation is truly admirable.

Thank you for this unforgettable experience and for opening my eyes. Your work has given me direction and motivation to change. After high school, I went to study Sustainable Design at a university in England. Today, I do strategic branding for companies that, like you, are trying to change the world for the better. I'm grateful to be part of the Save Turtle project. Thanks for everything, Hana!

Marie Szostková,
design student at the university in England, creator of the new logo for the project Save Turtle (2022), 3rd place in the competition 'Coconut instead of Turtle' (2018)

There are so many people in the world who know something is wrong. They may even be wondering what it could be. I like the fact that you're not just talking about the problem, you're taking an action. Turtles are beautiful, but few people realize that we need their beauty to keep the ecosystem going, we need them. I hadn't thought about it before, how quickly a creature that was here before us can extinct.

After your lecture, I became interested in this, and it got me thinking about how I can help. Man is not the strongest creature in the world, but he can change more than anyone else. You used the power of people the right way. Judging by the number of turtles you've saved; you've already done more than I thought possible. As they say, even the impossible can be done. I'm glad we as a school contributed and were able to cover one month's salary for a ranger. I wish I had the same will and determination as you; it has long been a dream of mine to contribute at least a small amount against deforestation. You have made me feel that I can always help if I find the right way that really helps. I can't offer much help, but I can write with a clear conscience that at least our school supports you and protection of turtles; we try to spread information further. I am determined to become one of the volunteers and wish you a lots of strength and success.

Tereza Kulhavá,
Student at College Hradec Králové

3 PLACES IN INDONESIA AND **1** PLACE IN SRI LANKA

**33 789 HATCHLINGS RELEASED INTO THE SEA;
and approx. 1 770 HATCHLINGS MADE THEIR WAY TO THE SEA ON THEIR OWN**

= 35 559

465 CLUTCHES PROTECTED
FROM POACHERS

41 VOLUNTEERS
(28 IN INDONESIA, 13 IN SRI LANKA)

9 RANGERS

COOPERATION WITH **46** HOTELS;
COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT

75 events
(43 for schools, out of it 2 online; 32 for public)

11 articles
(4 articles in Czech, 7 in Indonesian newspaper)

10 interviews
(2 radio interviews, 2 podcast, 3 interviews on
Czech TV, 3 interviews on Indonesian TV)

... a zvyšování
informovanosti:

1 video on project in Czech and English

1 video for volunteers

7 exhibitions of photographs

COOPERATION WITH FACULTY OF SCIENCE
CHARLES UNIVERSITY AND PRIRODOVEDCI.CZ

+ 1 calendar and 2 auctions on Facebook under the project Hand-in-Hand

INTRODUCING THE SAVE TURTLE NGO

A lot of people say we're crazy. I guess so, but we enjoy it, and our work makes sense to us. Without getting paid for it, in our free time, on weekends, on holidays, we do everything we can to keep the sea turtle program going and expanding. We love nature, we care about education, we are active and open to anyone who would like to help. Together we can do more than we can alone.

Hana Vašina Svobodová – founder and Chairwoman of the organization; biologist who has been dedicated to the protection of sea turtles for nineteen years; she coordinates the program with conservationists from Indonesia and Sri Lanka; Hana is in charge of the Czech Facebook page and promotion, lectures; on parental leave she enjoys time with her two-year-old daughter; if she has any time left, she works in the field of teacher training.

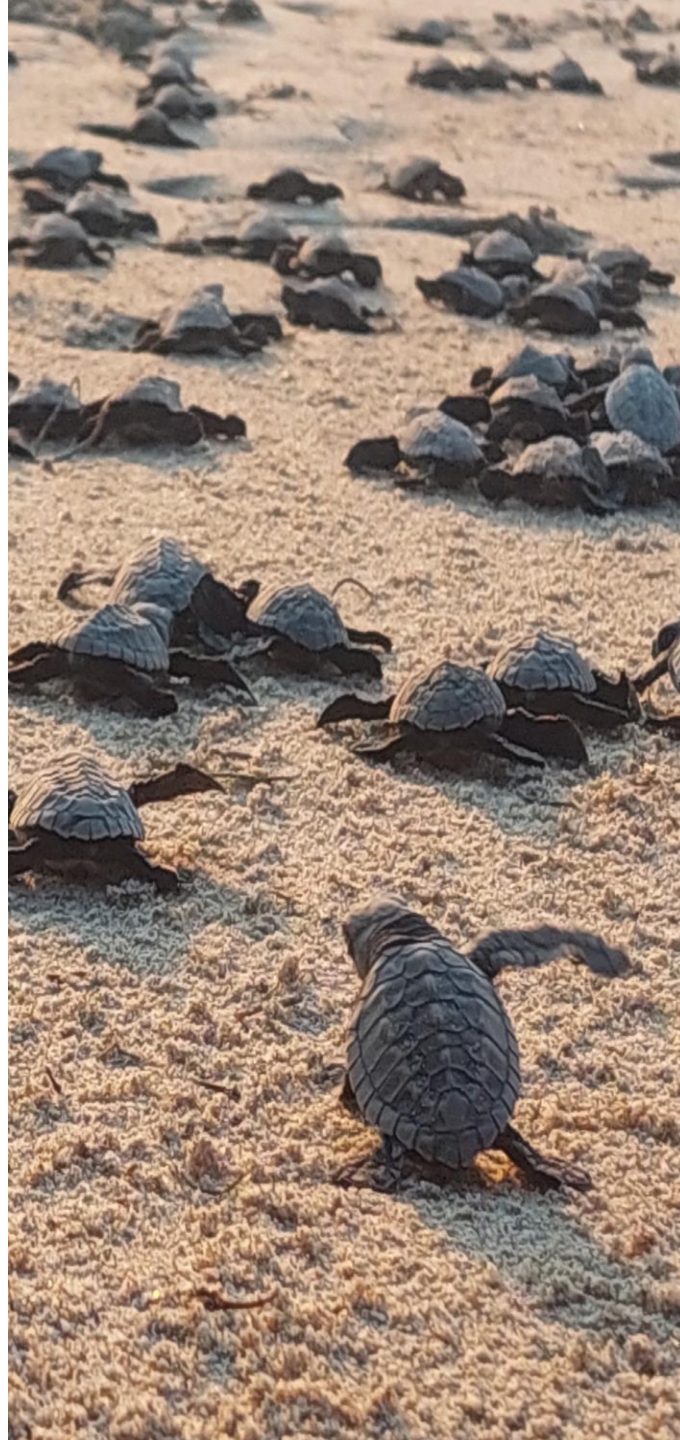
Tomáš Svoboda – Deputy Chair; Tomas finished his studies of International Relations at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno; in 2023 he monitored the sale of turtle meat in Indonesia.

Nataša Velenská – Chairwoman of the Turtle Breeders Club and expert on reptiles.

Saša Zdeňková a Tomáš Kolman they visited Indonesia 4 times already as volunteers; they lecture in the Czech Republic and help with promotion of the program.

Eva Bílková – PhD student of biology at the University of Ostrava; in addition to scientific work, she is dedicated to popularizing science and conservation; in spring 2023, she spent two and a half months as a volunteer in Indonesia thanks to the OU AID program; she helped rangers, monitored turtle centers in Bali; she is a coordinator of volunteers going to Indonesia.

Jitka Kubalová – in her professional life she is an accountant; for NGO she analyses data from Indonesia, sends donation certificates and coordinates events in the Czech Republic; she is involved in humanitarian aid in Uganda, supports Czech shelters and rescue stations.



Olga Býmová – volunteering in Indonesia motivated her to help in the Czech Republic; she helps with Czech/ English translations and administration; in 2023 she focused on finding new places to expand protection.

Hana Redererová – she studied Czech language; from Australia she helps with English texts and communicates with donors.

Eva Šlosarčíková – breeder and protector of Czech and tropical fauna; she organizes auctions of FB group Hand-in-Hand.

Petra Klembarová – a student of biology at Charles University; in February 2023, she helped with project development in Sri Lanka; her findings and monitoring results will be presented in scientific article for Government of Sri Lanka. In her free time, she runs several boating and science clubs under the Children and Youth House; enjoys camping, water and skiing with her family; helps out at events in the country

Pepík Brůna – botanist who helps with web site design; he issues certificates to donors, deals with graphs and statistics for a scientific articles.

Alexandra Jászayová – is helping to write scientific articles and is in charge of Slovak Facebook.

Karolína Dzurendová – is in charge of Instagram project.

Vlasta Pauke Dobešová – keeps the accounting books for the organization.

and there are many others who help on a regular basis, and I am very grateful to all of them!



The teams in Southeast Asia that we support, coordinate and fund



On the island of Lembata in southeastern Indonesia, the ***Sahabat penyu Loang*** team protects turtles. Namely Poly, Ado, Kornelis, Juvent, Wilhelmus, Gerardus and Agustinus. We have also started working with John S. J. Batafor and his local after-school organization, ***Taman Daun***.

In the Berau region of Borneo, we support the education and development of local people. We work with Mr. Rambli, the headmaster of the primary school in Maratue, and with Sablon, a craftsman who used to make souvenirs from turtle shells. Today, thanks to our workshops, he has stopped doing this and now teaches others how to make souvenirs from sustainable materials such as coconut.

In South Borneo, in the Sembilan archipelago, we launched the project on sea turtle conservation. From June 2023 we protect turtles on Denawan Island. From January 2024, direct protection will start on the islands of Pamalikan and Matasirih. Till now, Buzzdhar Palakang and Abdul Malik from ***Pamali Indonesia*** are working in the team, but the team will be soon expanded.

In Sri Lanka, on Bathigama beach near Dikwella, ranger ***Gayan Sampath*** provides protection to sea turtles. We work closely with the state-run Kapuhenwala Sea Turtle Conservation Centre near Tangalle, mostly with a conservationist called Danushka. We are also in close contact with Mr. Channa Suraweera from the Department of Wildlife Conservation.

In 2023, the funding from Czech Republic ensured salaries for 9 rangers, education material and tools for development of local people. All Czech team members are volunteers and no one from Czech team received financial reward.

AWARDS FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

Award of Honorary Consul of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the Czech Republic - *For Contribution to the Protection of Sea Turtles in Sri Lanka (2021)*

PETA Asia – inclusion of Konservasi biota laut Berau team in the Animal Heroes selection during Covid-19
<https://www.petaasia.com/news/animal-activist-heroes-covid-19-pandemic/> (2020)

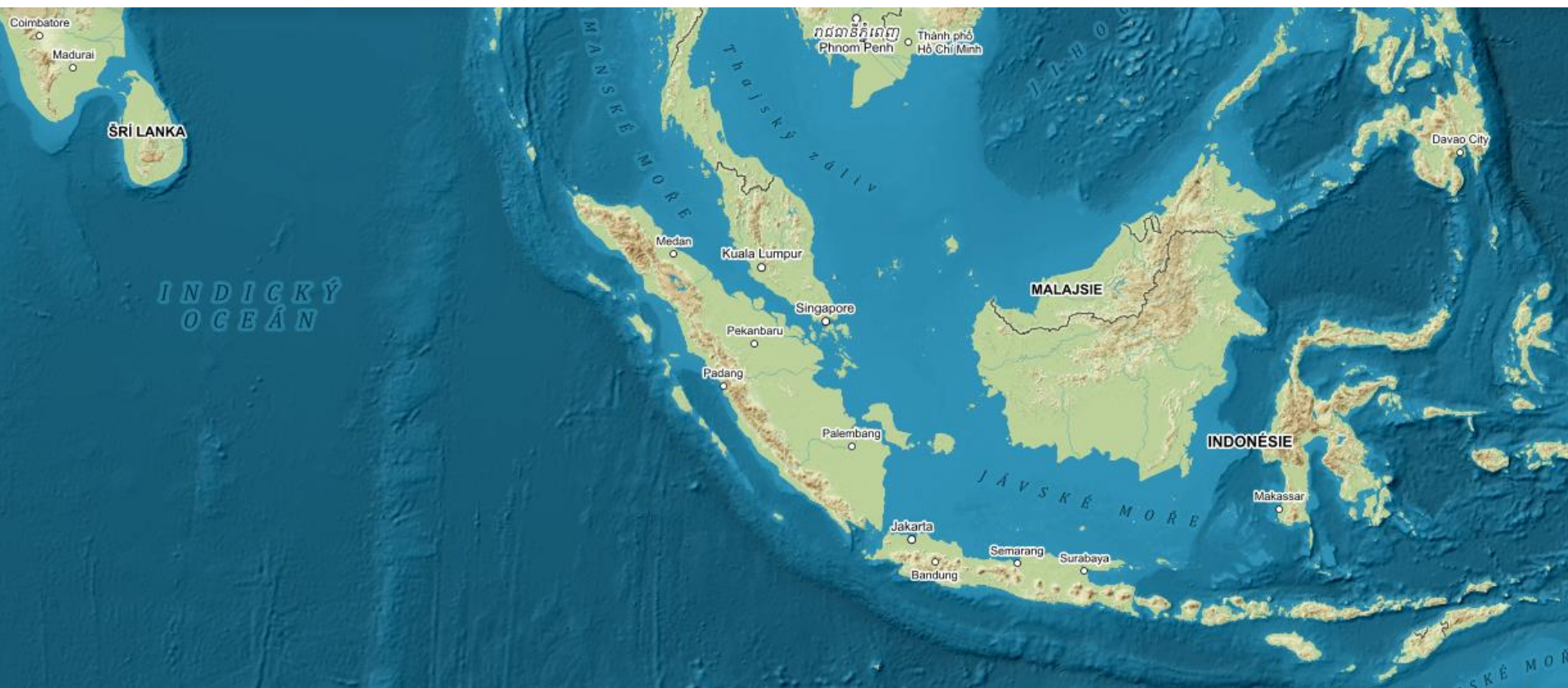
Forbes magazine listed Hana Svobodová among the promising young Czech people under 33 years

Nomination for the *Josef Vavroušek Award* for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Environmental Protection (2019)

Zdeněk Veselovský Award for the research project *Abundance and Behavior of Leatherback Turtles (Dermochelys coriacea) in Coastal Waters of southern Ireland (2008)*



PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLES



SEA TURTLES ARE A GROUP OF REPTILES THAT HAVE BEEN ON EARTH FOR MORE THAN 110 MILLION OF YEARS. ALL 7 SPECIES ARE THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION. THE MOST DIFFICULT SITUATION IS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHERE SEA TURTLES HAVE ALREADY DISAPPEARED IN MANY PLACES.

THIS IS THE REASON FOR OUR SUPPORT IN THIS AREA.

Sea turtles play an essential role in marine ecosystems and are key to ensuring balance. For example, they maintain healthy sea grass beds for thousands of small fish, which are important part of the underwater food chain. Turtles also maintain productive coral reefs or feeds on ton of jellyfish. This keeps the ecosystem in balance.

We coordinate and secure funding for the projects that protect four species of sea turtles in Indonesia and Sri Lanka (Hawksbill, Loggerhead, Green and Olive ridley sea turtles). We protect beaches with hatchlings, female turtles, we move the eggs to safe places, we are guarding hatchlings on their free way to the sea. In addition to direct conservation, we also support the development of local people, and focus on education.

One of the biggest problems for turtles is ineffective protection. Only turtles that would not survive in the wild should be kept in rescue centers. Your visit to turtle centers has a big impact. Please visit centers with programs that actually help sea turtles. Turtles in pools have stunted muscles (they cannot swim against the waves), their lungs are not developed (they cannot dive enough), and they do not know how to hunt for food. After two days, they lose the instinct to know where and how to return in adult age back to their home beach to lay the eggs. It means that hatchlings must be released on the day of hatching when the sand is cool (after 6pm).

Let's support the protection of young sea turtles without imprisoning them in pools.

SEA TURTLES BELONG IN THE SEA, NOT IN POOLS.

LET'S SUPPORT PROTECTION OF TURTLES AND THUS THE OCEANS.



PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLES IN INDONESIA

LEMBATA ISLAND

LEMBATA ISLAND IS LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF INDONESIA. THE LOCAL ORGANISATION WE SUPPORT, *SEHABAT PENYU LOANG*, PROTECTS TURTLES ON FOUR BEACHES (RIABAO, RIANGDUA, WUAKERONG, DUAWUTUN). IT AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT THIS YEAR ALMOST 2x MORE TURTLES CAME TO LAY EGGS ON THESE BEACHES COMPARE TO LAST YEAR (91 CLUTCHES PROTECTED FROM POACHERS IN 2023 COMPARED TO 54 CLUTCHES IN 2022).

With every project we encounter some problems, things happen that we are not happy about and need to be solved. At the end of 2022, we repaired and expanded the protected part of beach at Lembata, where the rangers were moving the turtle eggs. We all believed that this part would serve for this purpose for many years. Unfortunately, in late July 2023, a man from the next village claimed this part of land as his own. The land was donated to the NGO for our activities by the mayor in 2019 as a part of land owned by the state; the NGO had a contract for it. However, there is no cadastral office in Indonesia. Therefore it is difficult to find the truth. The protected part of the beach is deteriorating, and rangers cannot officially use it.

I'm incredibly annoyed by this situation. In the Czech Republic, we would know immediately the truth, and solution would follow. There, the dispute has been going on for six months and it is mainly the turtles who are suffering. The ranges have to move the eggs from the original nesting place to any part of the beach where the female's trail is not showing, thus hiding the nest from poachers. But wild dogs can easily sniff the eggs out, and the public release of hatchlings for which the program was so famous cannot be organized. I sincerely hope that we can resolve the situation with the mayor, the rangers and the alleged owner during the trip to the Lembata planned for February 2024. Keep your fingers crossed.

Fortunately, there's also plenty of good news from Lembata Island in 2023. Even though the market in the island's capital, Lewoleba, still occasionally sells products





from turtle shells, thanks to volunteers, the rangers managed to meet with the police, the Ministry of Environment and other authorities and made signs that are placed in the market warning that it is illegal to sell or buy products from turtle shells and it is punishable by a fine. I am very happy about this, and I believe that this action will lead to reduction of sale of turtle shell.

Other volunteers painted the boat used by rangers. While monitoring the coastline, the motifs of animals and plants from the underwater life will show everyone how beautiful and important the sea and its animals are in Lembata.

Thanks to the volunteers, we also started to work with Taman Daun, a local educational after-school organization based in the capital of Lembata Island, Lewoleba. In addition to education, this organization is dedicated to restoring a coral reef destroyed by unsustainable fishing on Waijarang Beach. Volunteers were attaching coral fragments to the manufactured substrate. A healthy coral reef will help return fish and turtles to the coast, and to balance the local underwater area.

8 719 HATCHLINGS RELEASED INTO THE SEA

(6 949 WERE RELEASED, approx. 1770 MADE THEIR WAY ON THEIR OWN FROM NESTS REMOVED WITHIN THE BEACH)

91 CLUTCHES PROTECTED FROM POACHERS

(70 OLIVE RIDLEY'S, 19 HAWSKBIL'S a 2 GREEN'S)

7 RANGERS

24 VOLUNTEERS

1 PROTECTED ISLAND– BEACHES NEAR 4 VILLAGES

(Loang, Riangdua, Wuakerong a Riabao)

7 ARTICLES in Indonesian newspapers

3 BROADCASTS ON LOCAL TV

COOPERATION WITH A LOCAL AFTER-SCHOOL ORGANIZATION TAMAN DAUN



PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLES IN INDONESIA IN THE PULAU SEMBILAN ARCHIPELAGO (BORNEO)

THE PULAU SEMBILAN ARCHIPELAGO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT BREEDING PLACE FOR GREEN TURTLES IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF BORNEO. THERE IS ACTIVE A LOCAL ORGANISATION, PAMALI INDONESIA. ONE OF OUR EX-COLLEAGUES FROM THE BERAU AREA WORKS NOW FOR THIS ORGANIZATION.

The organization had a long-standing shortage of funding and therefore was lacking the rangers and was planning to reduce the protection. We decided to support the local turtles and from June 2023 we fund the salary of a key ranger on Denawan Island. There are a lot of turtles laying eggs there, rangers are saving hundreds of eggs a day, not only from poachers but a from hungry monitor lizards, rats, crabs and birds. Eggs have to be relocated due to erosion, and the local beaches are literally disappearing before our eyes. But the rangers are enthusiastic; they even dug a well on the island. In the future, this should result in savings for less import of fresh water. We like the great effort and motivation of the local rangers, therefore together we agreed to expand the project. Throughout the autumn of 2023, Pamali Indonesia organization has been collecting the necessary permits from the government and cooperation agreements.

All documents were obtained, rangers talked to locals in every village on the islands with the participation of mayors and police, rangers cleaned up the hatchery from driftwood and waste. We have already raised the money to build a simple house for rangers, so we went for for it. From January 2024, we can start protection together and officially on the other two islands of Pamalikan and Matasirih. Till now, only poachers were there, and up to twenty clutches a day were lost. Thank you very much for your support.

23 804 HATCHLINGS RELEASED INTO THE SEA

338 CLUTCHES PROTECTED FROM POACHERS

(12 HAWSKBIL'S a 326 GREEN'S)

1 RANGER

2 VOLUNTEERS

1 PROTECTED ISLAND– Denawan

Preparation for protection of two other islands



EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PEOPLE IN INDONESIA

THERE WAS A TOTAL OF 28 VOLUNTEERS IN INDONESIA IN 2023. THAT IS A BIG NUMBER WITH HUGE IMPACT; ESPECIALLY FOR THE EDUCATION OF LOCAL CHILDREN AND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCALS. VOLUNTEERS TAUGHT ABOUT TURTLES, OCEAN, NATURE AND WASTE MINIMIZATION ON ISLANDS OF BALI, LOMBOK, FLORES, KUPANG, LEMBATA, IN SEMBILAN ARCHIPELAGO IN SOUTH BORNEO AND IN BERAU REGION.

Learning takes place mostly in local schools or just on the porch or at the home of rangers. However, in 2023, in Lembata we managed to establish cooperation with the local educational after-school organization Taman Daun, which is based in the capital of the island, Lewoleba. More than a hundred children come here every afternoon. Our volunteers teach them not only about the nature and turtles, but English as well. Or they can teach them swimming or how to fish in a way friendly to nature.

The volunteers visited twice the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Kupang and gave lectures for students. It was very beneficial that the lecture was given by a student from the Veterinary University in Brno together with a professional veterinarian, there was a lot of topics to share.





Volunteers handed out stickers with information about the importance of turtles and their conservation. They distribute them as well to hotels, to tourist and diving centers or to local conservationists who plant corals. And to schools, tourist guides and in public places. They tried the skills at the very popular street art. They were all over Lembata Island, and frequently a group of young people would gather around them, asking where they come from, the reason for their stay at Lembata. The volunteers showed photos, videos, the websites and FB page and talked about turtles. Together they painted the logo and a link to the local conservation group's FB page.

The rangers are raising public awareness as well. In March, the head of SAHABAT PENYU LOANG was invited as one of the speakers at the auditorium of SMA Don Bosco High School in the capital of Lembata Island, Lewoleba. In front of an audience of 70 people, he spoke about turtles, their biology, why they are important in the ocean, what threatens them, and how the rangers on Lembata are helping them.

During 2023, three volunteers were also in the Berau area of Borneo, where we ended project on direct sea turtle protection in October 2022. They taught children in schools, cleaned the beaches, monitored the sale of turtle meat and the turtles themselves. Most importantly supported local people and a project to produce souvenirs from sustainable materials. Our local colleague, artisan Sablon, is teaching more and more people to make souvenirs from coconuts instead of turtle shells. I am very happy about that. In 2023 we were working on opportunity to volunteer in this area on a regular basis. I hope to finalize the project during the trip, which is scheduled for February 2024.

THE LOCAL SMALL ISLANDS IN THIS AREA ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT HATCHERIES FOR GREEN TURTLES. AND NOT ONLY IN INDONESIA, BUT IN THE WHOLE SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THEREFORE, THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PEOPLE IS REALLY CRUCIAL FOR THE SURVIVAL OF TURTLES.

28 VOLUNTEERS

7 ISLANDS WHERE EDUCATION TOOK PLACE

1 LOCAL CRAFTSMAN

PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLES IN SRI LANKA

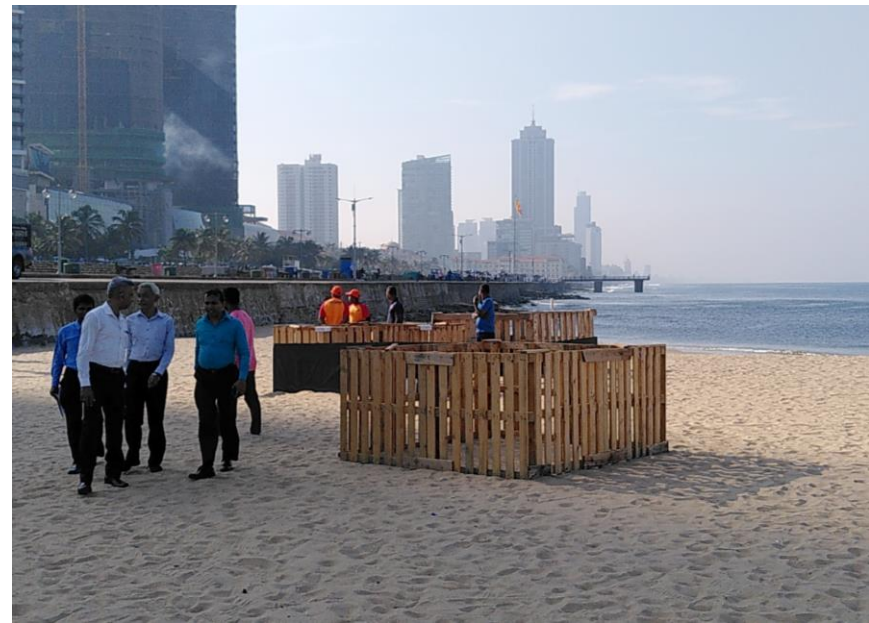
THE PROJECT IN SRI LANKA HAS BEEN DEVELOPED A LOT DURING 2023. IT IS A STABLE PROGRAMME TODAY. WE HAVE ONE RANGER, THE VOLUNTEERS COME TO THE SITE REGULARLY TO HELP. A LOT OF WORK WAS DONE.

In February, we visited 21 sea turtle centers in 22 days. We agreed on cooperation with 18 hotels, 5 times we met with official representatives from the Department of Wildlife Conservation, 3 times with local NGOs. In 5 places we consulted on starting or improving protection. We discussed cooperation with a women's craft workshop in Bentota. In addition, we did one full-day craft workshop organized by government officials and 3 lectures on protection of turtles for the public. We never dreamed of such efficiency in our preparations. I am proud of the results of the trip.

If you'd like to hear about our trip in more detail, please visit the Podcast KlimaX.

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/klimax/episodes/Chrnit-mosk-elvy-je-posln-Hanky-Svobodov--nyn-nm-vyprv-zitky-z-jej-posledn-cesty-po-Sr-Lance-e20hsnm/a-a9gk3fv>

We were very fortunate to meet Gayan, a carpenter who has been protecting turtles on the beaches west of Dikwella for ten years. On his own, the way he feels best, from the heart. He moves the eggs to safety, release the hatchlings into the sea as soon as they hatch. We went through the methodology and agreed to support his activities. We teamed him up with colleagues from the Wildlife Department. Today, he can protect the turtles legally and more effectively.





Thanks to our support, Gayan has already built in the summer of 2023 a protected part on the beach.

Just like the rangers at Lembata in Indonesia in 2022, Gayan started to plant the trees on the coast in Sri Lanka in 2023 - trying to slow erosion. We hope that planting will reduce sand washing up from the beaches.

There is one rarity in the local bay - you can see frequently about 2-4 adult turtles in the sea, you can swim close to them. Unfortunately, not all tourists respect these turtles as wild animals and behave correctly. Therefore we placed signs on the beach explaining the rules. Hopefully, along with presence of Gayan and his new ranger uniform, this will help, and tourists will stop touching the turtles.

We are helping also the Rekawa Turtle Watch Centre to develop active and effective approach towards tourists. We have designed and implemented signs and information panels for this place. We believe that with the new information system tourists will be more respectful of the rules when watching the turtles, not shining white lights at the turtles, making noise, etc... Please help us by saying no to tourists who don't behave as they should. Every responsible traveler counts. Thank you very much!

In Sri Lanka, we also support the government's Kapuhenwala Sea Turtle Conservation Centre. Our volunteers (13 arrived in 2023!) helped the rangers on the beach and taught local children about the turtles. I am glad that volunteers visited the orphanage, taught at schools in Tangalle, Rekawa and Dickwele, in places close to their accommodation. Unfortunately, the volunteers found that 43% of the children had already eaten turtle eggs.

It was an incredible experience when volunteers took local children to the rescue center in Kapuhenwala. These children live around the corner but had never been there before. They saw newly hatched turtles for the first time. Together with volunteers they released them into the sea.

The volunteers also continue to communicate with the hotels. I'm very happy to say that we have agreed cooperation with 46 hotels. We talk to managers about the turtles, explaining which way of protection is helping. We are delighted that hotels, resorts and small accommodations are interested in sending tourists to places where the protection of turtles is really happening.

3 036 HATCHLINGS RELEASED INTO THE SEA

36 CLUTCHES OF GREEN AND OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLES
PROTECTED FROM POACHERS

1 RANGER

13 VOLUNTEERS

2 PROTECTED BEACHES

EDUCATION

COOPERATION WITH 46 HOTELS AND GOVERNMENT



MONITORING THE SITUATION OF SEA TURTLES

MONITORING OF SEA TURTLE CENTERS WAS CARRIED OUT IN INDONESIA (JAVA, BALI, LOMBOK, GILI) AND IN SRI LANKA. UNFORTUNATELY, IN MOST PLACES, TURTLES ARE SEEN AS A MEANS OF MAKING MONEY. MOST CENTRES ARE TOURIST TRAPS, NOT THE PLACES OF EFFECTIVE PROTECTION. SOMETIMES THIS IS DUE TO A LACK OF STAFF KNOWLEDGE ON PROPER PROTECTION. SOMETIMES THE STAFF JUST DON'T CARE ABOUT THE ANIMALS. BUT MOST OF THE TIME IT IS TO MAKE MONEY.

The centers often buy eggs from fishermen, which encourages illegal egg theft from beaches. They claim there are only injured turtles in the pool. But most of the turtles look quite healthy, not to mention the small ones. In many places they feed turtles incorrectly, keeping different species together in the pools. I've seen Hawksbill turtle nibbling on the leg stumps of handicapped Olive Ridley turtle. One center claimed that out of 100 eggs only 35 turtles hatch on average. This is the result of the eggs being handled carelessly during transport. Eggs are often transported from fishermen on motorbikes, in a plastic bag, moved, turned...

Small turtles are often kept in pools until tourists arrive and pay to release them. Unfortunately, this happens during the day, even in direct sunlight, on the hot sand (because, like a shop, the center is closed in the evening). The tourists do not know that they've paid to send a turtle to its death - contact with the hot sand will overheat it and it will soon die in the sea. Turtles that have not been released are not much better off either - turtles in pools have stunted muscles (they can't swim against the waves), their lungs don't develop (they can't dive enough), and they can't hunt for food naturally. In addition, after two days, they lose the instinct of how and where to return to lay eggs as adults.

Only turtles that would not survive in the wild should be kept in centers. Your visit to turtle centers has a big impact. Please visit centers with programs that actually help sea turtles.





It's not difficult to identify such a center. Before you visit, please check the internet for photos of the rescue center you plan to visit (e.g., on maps). If you don't see hatchlings or healthy turtles in the pools or if they do not offer to release them during the day, visit the center and support it.

Keeping hatchlings and healthy turtles is certainly not conservation. Small and healthy sea turtles belong in the sea, not in pools. Thank you!

Fortunately, the overall situation for sea turtles in Sri Lanka is much better than in 2019. 11 sites have been developed under the Department of Wildlife Conservation. These centers are providing the right protection. Tourists are mostly not allowed to visit them. This is good for the turtles, they have peace, quiet and darkness. In addition, the Coast Guard has begun to protect the turtles - the local Coast Guards remove the eggs from the beach in front of the watch tower and release the hatchlings into the sea as soon as they hatch.

Monitoring of turtle centers was also carried out in Indonesia. Several volunteers visited centers in Java, Bali and Lombok and Gili Island. Everywhere they saw the same: turtles as a tourist attraction with a rescue center label. The hatchlings are in pools for months, in a few centimeters of water, fed on shredded fish meat. In several centers, the most touristy ones, it was a horrifying sight. Thousands of turtles, including adults, hundreds of people, mass releases of hatchlings on a crowded beach. The centers also keep sick or injured turtles, or turtles seized from black-market trade. These are said to be waiting at the centers as evidence in investigations. Constructive discussions with operators and staff was mostly impossible. We will send out our comments to all centers with recommendations on what to do differently and, more importantly, why. And to all of you who love turtles, thank you very much for not going to these centers and warning all who travel of their harmfulness. Interesting video is showing the difference when newly hatched turtles run out to the sea and turtles that have been in pools. The video was taken while monitoring the turtle centers in Indonesia. Please refer to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGNks-yd_qI&t=39s.

The only positive thing is that some of the centers are educating about turtles and the ocean, cleaning beaches, planting trees, corals or mangroves. At least it makes sense, although whether it works when there are dead turtles in the pool next to the live ones, I don't know. Some centers keep hatchlings in tanks for several years, justifying this by low survival of hatchlings in the ocean. I find that totally inappropriate. I think we should do conservation naturally, release the hatchlings immediately after hatching into the sea. Along with that, for better chance of their survival we should address waste in the ocean, overfishing, climate change, etc..

When we see dozens of these bad centers and hear talk about how a few turtles don't mind being shown to children, that this develops their positive relationship with turtles, I think about it in numbers. There were about 3 000 turtles in the 36 centers we visited this year alone. It is estimated that there is about 200,000 turtles of all species in the sea today.

Is not the number of sacrificed turtles too high? Would it not be enough just to have an adequate number of true rescue centers in each country with those turtles that would not survive in the sea and would be thus put to good use for education? After all, everyone can see the turtles at their natural release. The locals still can cooperate and earn money. And still, it will help the turtles.



I am pleased that some hotel resorts want to help and have taken some activities into their own hands. The security guards who patrol the hotel grounds at night are alerted when turtles come onto the beach and move the eggs to safety. They release the hatchlings as soon as they hatch. I recommend Anantara Peace Heaven Tangalle Resort, Weligama Bay Resort, Infinity of Sri Lanka, Tropical Garden. Thank you to all these hotels and dive centers. There is still a lot more work to be done in this area. But I believe that with time the public's view will change due to all the campaigns, And that a photo with a turtle from the pool the pool just won't be in. Thank you for your help. Everyone who doesn't visit such centers is taking a step towards a better future for turtles.

**WE HAVE BEEN MONITORING 21 SEA TURTLE CENTRES IN SRI LANKA AND 15 IN INDONESIA
(JAVA, BALI, LOMBOK, GILI).**

If you are travelling to a country other than Sri Lanka or Indonesia, we would appreciate if you could share with us any experience you encounter with sea turtle conservation during your travels. Please send information along with photos and videos to hanka.sauria@seznam.cz. We will be happy to post your insights on the Facebook.

We want tourists to support the centers that protect turtles effectively. We want tourists avoiding the places that are just traps, without providing effective protection to turtles. Thank you for your cooperation.



RAISING AWARENESS

IT'S BEEN A RIDE THIS YEAR. WE HELD 75 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC. THAT'S ALMOST 1.5 EVENTS A WEEK. THIS IS INCREDIBLE.

I am very happy that I managed to redistribute some activities in the team and that more of us are involved in the events. The team is still developing, we are updating and improving our lectures, inventing new games about turtles, and we are happy to inspire others with our activities. There were 43 events for schools. Sometimes that means three times 1,5h in one day. Two events were online. We visited camps, we held 32 events for the public. Our main mission is to inform about the situation of turtles, about the threats to them and how we can all help them. We educate others about ocean issues, share tips for responsible travel, and present how to minimize waste. I am pleased that our workshops and lectures are not just empty words for pupils and students. I like that they think of ways how they can help themselves. And they make it happen:

At the school in Volyn, the first-grade pupils dedicated their time to turtles from April to June. They made 3D turtles and decorated paper bags with them. They put written information about the turtles in each bag. They took the bags home as a gift for their parents, the municipal office, the library, the school staff and teachers. And the older students prepared a presentation and talk for the younger students. At the Primary School V Zahradách in Beroun, pupils propagated and planted plants, made ceramic and fabric turtles, and baked sweet treats, then spent the whole afternoon talking about turtles with parents and classmates. Students of the Jana Palacha Gymnasium in Mělník organized a Run for the Turtles. Thanks to the entry fee, donations for home-made snacks and small gifts, they raised enough money for a monthly salary for 7 rangers! I find that incredible. You can see what it was like in the Run for the Turtles in Mělník news broadcast on October 2, 2023.





Many thanks to all pupils, students and teachers. For example, the pupils of the T.G. Masaryk Primay School in Moravské Budějovice speak of their school as a school with turtles in its heart. It makes me very happy. Every year, they organize three events for the turtles - the first on the occasion of Animal Day in the autumn, the second at Christmas and the third at the Moravian-Budejovice eco-fair.

Thank you for helping us raise awareness about turtles and how we can all help them. It makes a lot of sense.

Seven exhibitions of photographs from the project were well received. They were held at the Holiday World fair, at the Chodov shopping center, at the University of Ostrava, at the Brno University of Life Sciences, at the center of Charles University and the Hybernská Didaktikon Campus. Thousands have seen photographs of Petr Jan Juračka. I believe that the ones with open eyes were not only fascinated but also inspired. Peter, thank you very much for your help!

In September I was a guest on Czech Television on the program **Events, Commentaries** on ČT24.

https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/1096898594-udalosti-komentare/223411000370915/?fbclid=IwAR1dY7Q0RSFDt1YaUWxVPcvdesqoCOX95YipHAI83u0XIU0Y_F13SbSaw5A (from 53:18) and on TV Nova's

Breakfast with Nova

<https://photos.onedrive.com/share/814BCE966858443A!354210?cid=814BCE966858443A&resId=814BCE966858443A!354210&authkey=!AOkOk4P2No5vQvw&ithint=video&e=T9SXYP>

I talked about the situation of sea turtles, which are now threatened with extinction, about so-called rescue centers, where they keep healthy turtles in pools or the alleged attacks by turtles on tourists in Croatia. Check it out. I recommend reading the article in **Be The Best** magazine

https://www.morskezelvy.cz/pool/vzor/upload/clanky/042-045b_zelvy.pdf and interview in **hedvabnastezka.cz** <https://www.hedvabnastezka.cz/hana-svobodova-mnoha-zelvi-centra-jsou-pasti-na-turisty/>

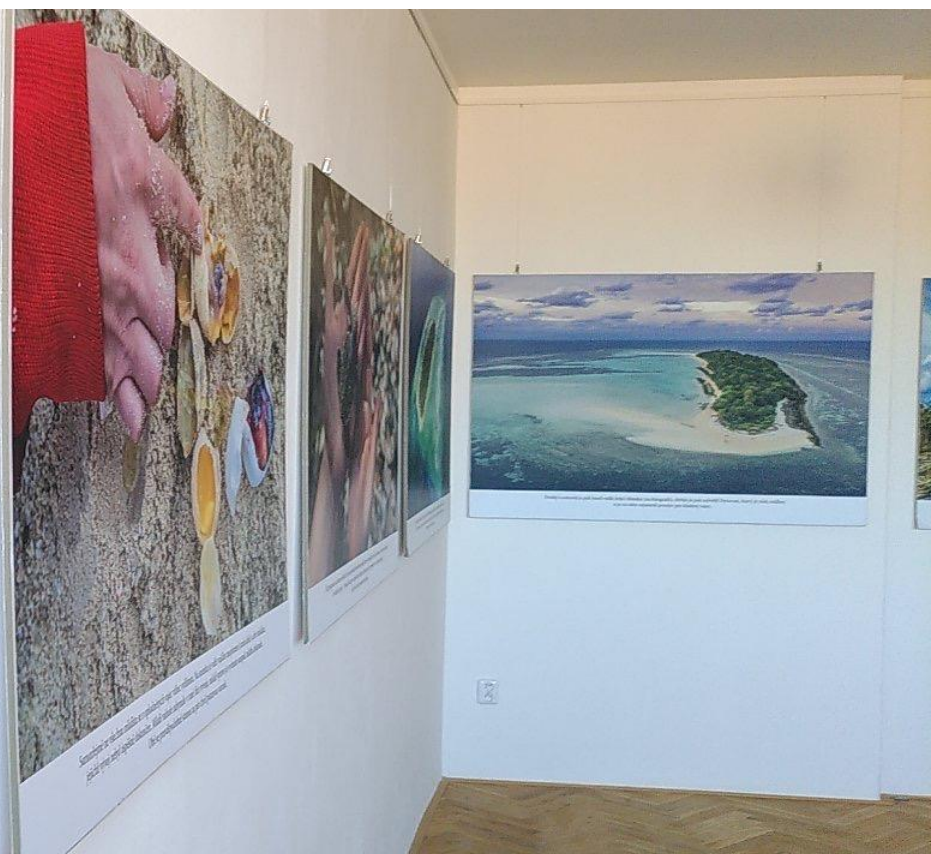


And if you prefer to listen, you shouldn't miss the podcast **Taste (Nature) Science** - the Faculty of Science podcast– [O ochraně mořských želv, o novém projektu na jihu Bornea, o tom, jak mě ovlivnilo studium na Přf UK, jak vypadá práce ochránáře, o želvách i místních lidech](#)

You may noticed that I have mentioned Charles University several times. I like all schools, but Charles University is my alma mater, I studied there and I would not mind repeating my studies. I am very glad that this year we have become more connected with Přírodovědci.cz, a popularization project of the Faculty of Science of Charles University in Prague. In addition to the podcast, we participated in a public event organized by them. In cooperation with them we organized Exhibition in Didaktikon, and I gave lecture at a junior conference in UK.

Přírodovědci.cz started to offer our exhibition to schools <https://www.prirodovedci.cz/eduweb/ucitel/katalog/320-vystava-morske-zelvy/?st=1&sec=1&fbclid=IwAR3JEusiQL-F98sRYIbXxphRy6Gt1NdsVHSxfjh3lesMD3XW9IHbDd2Q5os>

And soon their offer will also include workshops for pupils. I am very happy about the cooperation.



And I'm grateful for the beautiful videos, too.

The first one presents our project and is in Czech and English version. Can you tell who narrated the Czech version?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO6mrw2U0eg>

The second is aimed at those who are attracted to volunteering at Lembata

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv2MtfNeUbo&t=2s>

It shows what it looks like there, what you can do and what you can do to help most effectively.

Many thanks also to all the authors of the photographs you will find in the calendar Protecting Sea Turtles in Sri Lanka, namely:

Martin Procházka, Ivo Řehůřek, Channa Suraweera, Jakub Martínek, Eliška Šišková, Anuradha Ediriweera, Gayan Sampath a archive Chráníme mořské želvy z.s.

75 events (43 for schools, out of it 2 online; 32 for public)

11 articles (4 articles in Czech, 7 in Indonesian newspaper)

2 radio interviews, 2 podcasts

3 interviews on Czech TV, 3 on Indonesian TV

1 video on project in Czech and English

1 video for volunteers

7 exhibitions of photographs

1 calendar

**Cooperation with Faculty of Science Charles University
and prirodovedci.cz**

2 auctions on Facebook under the project Hand-in-Hand



SUCCESS OF THE YEAR

I CONSIDER THE SUCCESS OF THE YEAR SOMETHING THAT IS NOT VISIBLE AND MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT YET. WE HAVE SPENT MORE THAN HALF A YEAR MAKING THIS HAPPEN. AND WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT? FROM JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2024, WE WILL EXTEND SEA TURTLE PROTECTION TO THREE MORE SITES, AND MAYBE ONE MORE SOON.

Following the decision to stop supporting the direct conservation of sea turtles in Berau, our regular expenditure has been reduced. The funds that were sent there to help the turtles started to accumulate in a transparent account. We didn't want to leave the money lying around, we wanted to help where it was needed. We began to look for organizations that see conservation the same way we do - protecting turtles effectively, without pools, dedicated to education, as well as to direct protection. Our volunteer Clara attended the Sea Turtle Symposium in Jakarta, Indonesia in June. This conference focused on the methods to protect sea turtles.

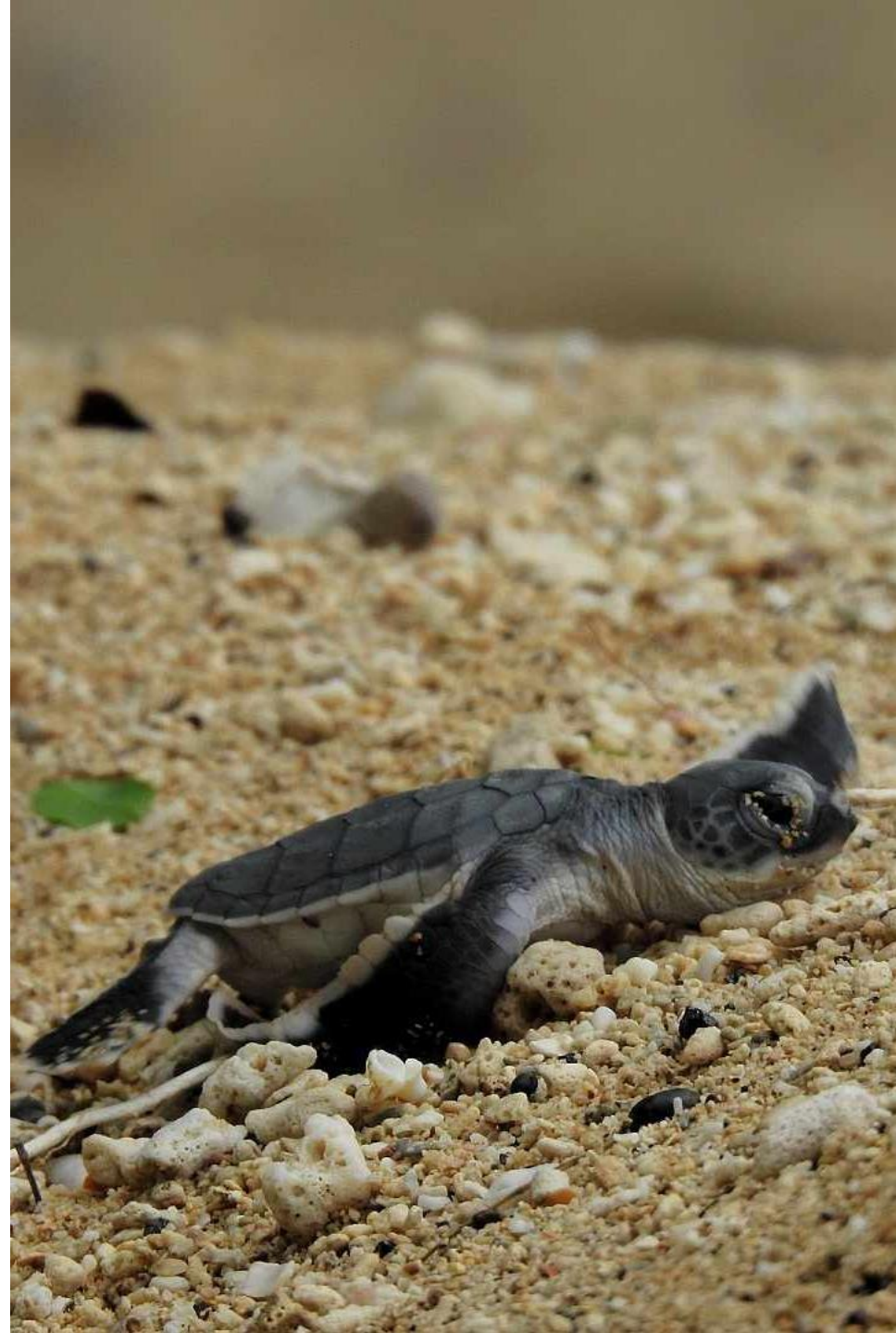


At the conference were about 100 participants from various countries in the "coral Triangle", both from governmental and non-governmental organisations, universities and conservationists. We have obtained contacts for cooperation. Another organizations was found by my colleague Olga thanks to the global map of conservation projects. We communicated with many people and got to know each other. We managed to establish cooperation with several organizations.

With organization [Pamali Indonesia](#), which we started supporting in 2023 to protect turtles on Denawan Island in the Sembilan Archipelago in southern Borneo, we will start protecting turtles on the neighboring islands of Pamalikan and Matasirih from January 2024. In the team are two employees who will focus on education and development of local people.

With the [Alliance for Tompotika Conservation](#), we will start protecting turtles in East Sulawesi from February 2024. The Tompotika peninsula is a place of great biodiversity, not only turtles are protected here, but also endemic birds, bats, the forests. The Alliance focuses on children's education and implements many development projects for the local community. I am very much looking forward to visiting both new locations in February 2024 and launching the program in the field.

We discussed cooperation with the university in Papua. They have a "Science for Conservation" program and protect large leatherbacks. Keep your fingers crossed, maybe thanks to this cooperation we'll start protecting this species as well.



THE NGO PLANS FOR 2024

WE BELIEVE IN WHAT WE DO AND WE TRY TO DO IT WELL. WE WILL DO EVERYTHING TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING HAPPEN IN 2024.

- continue with direct protection of the sea turtles on the island of Lembata (resolve the problem with the protected part of beach and start protecting 1-2 more places on this island.
- continue with direct protection on Denawan Island in the Sembilan Archipelago.
- start direct protection on Pamalikan and Matasirih Island in the Sembilan Archipelago
- launch cooperation on the direct protection of sea turtles in Sulawesi.
- continue with direct protection of turtles in Dikwella, Sri Lanka.
- support the government and the state center for protection of turtles in Kapuhenwela, Sri Lanka
- continue to develop effective direct protection of sea turtles in Sri Lanka.
- expand the network of hotels we work with in Sri Lanka to bring tourists to centers that protect turtles effectively.
- send out volunteers to Berau region in Borneo, Lembata and Sulawesi in Indonesia, to Sri Lanka
- support education and sustainable projects to improve the lives of local people in Indonesia and Sri Lanka
- to educate children in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic and other countries..
- raise awareness about the situation of sea turtles and responsible travel not only in the Czech Republic but also elsewhere in the world



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE SAVE TURTLE NGO IN 2023

Revenue: 1 090 903 CZK = donations

Costs: 408 043 CZK

execution of project in Indonesia 258 360 CZK

- Lembata 60 397 CZK – organization Sahabat penyu Loang
- Berau 27 222 CZK – education and support of local craftsmen
- archipelago Pulau Sembilan in Borneo 170 741 CZK – organization Pamali Indonesia

execution of project in Sri Lanka 104 619 CZK

- direct protection 33 611 CZK (ranger Gayan, state center Kapuhenwela, consultation for start up or more effected protection of turtles in other places)
- monitoring of 21 centers 22 250 CZK
- education, cooperation with government, local conservation organizations, hotels 30 239 CZK
- workshop, support of local craftsmen, tools 18 519 CZK

promotion 39 164 CZK (calendars, stickers, pens, hosting the web, charge for domain)

bank transfers 5 900 CZK

Details are available at: <https://ib.fio.cz/ib/transparent?a=2101346384>



We achieved many successes in 2023. We really appreciate your generous support without which we wouldn't be able to succeed. Thanks to all partners and supporters.

Klub chovatelů želv, INREKO SPOL. S R.O., ZOO Jihlava, Klub GORILA z.s., Nadace VIA, NOBILIS TILIA S.R.O., OS- USKUPENI TESLA, PROSAZ Z. U., Ruku v ruce, Stříbrné šperky OLIVIE.cz, [Teraristická společnost Praha](#), UK PŘÍRODOVĚDECKÁ FAKULTA, ČZU, ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES, Nadační fond CCBC, Glassor Decorations, ZO ČSOP "Natura, quo vadis?", Bactrianus z.s.

Gymnázium Jana Palacha Mělník, Gymnázium Milady Horákové, ZŠ Na Planině, ZŠ a MŠ Starý Plzenec, Lauderova základní škola, Mateřská škola Kulíšek, ZŠ Jihlava, ZŠ a MŠ Kladno, ZŠ Ústí nad Orlicí, ZŠ Dolní Dobrouč, ZŠ Bučovice, ZŠ a MŠ Živanice, ZŠ a MŠ Ostřešany, ZŠ Chrast, ZŠ a MŠ Tuněchody, SŠ, ZŠ a MŠ da Vinci Dolní Břežany, Mateřská škola Montessori Beroun a Základní škola s.r.o., Základní škola Neratovice, MŠ a ZŠ U Vrbiček, SOŠ veterinární Hradec Králové, ZŠ EDEN, ZŠ Náchod Plhov



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(listed are those who credited our transparent account with an amount higher than CZK 1,000 in 2023):

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Thank you everyone who
bid in the auctions,
either on the Facebook
page or on the *Hand-to-
Hand* profile.

Thank you everyone who
uses Givt.cz for shopping.

Foto:

PAMALI INDONESIA – 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, 29, 33, 34
SAHABAT PENYU LOANG – 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 23, 31, 35
CHMZ – 3, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 36
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And thank you to the whole team in the Czech Republic.

You are great and I really appreciate being with you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all volunteers and other coworkers.

I look forward to further cooperation with all of you!

CHRÁNÍME MOŘSKÉ ŽELVY, Z.S. SAVE TURTLE NGO

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Annual Report 2023

