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BACHELOR THESIS

The Motivation and Daily Work of Sea Turtle Activists from the Czech Republic for Their Work in Indonesia

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I declare that this bachelor thesis has been composed solely by myself and I listed all used sources and literature.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to get a better insight into the motivation and daily work of sea turtle activists who come from the Czech Republic and focus their work in Indonesia. It explores their initial interest in sea turtle conservation as well as how they tackle problems which can arise in their daily work. The theoretical part sheds light on the endangerment of sea turtles in Indonesia and how the conservation there is carried out. It also deals with the contribution of people from the Czech Republic to sea turtle conservation in Indonesia and how the local people perceive the conservation efforts. The practical part is conducted as five in-depth interviews to get detailed information about the practices and daily work of sea turtle conservationists.

Keywords:

Sea turtles, conservation, activists, the Czech Republic, Indonesia

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Introduction

All seven species of sea turtles are currently classified as endangered, and conservationists worldwide are working towards ensuring their survival. Human activity has significantly impacted the survival rates of sea turtles in the last two centuries. Sea turtles are hunted for their meat, eggs, skin, and shells, and they are also frequently targeted by poachers. Furthermore, their habitats are being degraded, and they are often caught unintentionally in fishing gear, which poses a significant threat to their population. (“WWF - World Wildlife Fund,” n.d.) This has prompted conservationists from around the world to act. This includes individuals from the Czech Republic, who are part of the conservation efforts in Indonesia because six of the seven sea turtle species are found in Indonesian waters. Despite being from a country with no easy access to the sea, people from the Czech Republic make a big contribution to sea turtle conservation.

The main objectives of this thesis are to explore the motivations and experiences of Czech individuals involved in sea turtle conservation efforts in Indonesia and examine the challenges and strategies employed in these conservation initiatives.

This thesis will shed light on what has sparked their interest in sea turtles and what the daily work of sea turtle activists looks like while also exploring the obstacles encountered in sea turtle conservation and their resolution. This thesis will shed light on the endangerment of sea turtles and why conservation is needed. Factors threatening sea turtles such as climate change, bycatch, destruction and pollution of their habitat and consumption of sea turtle eggs will be addressed. This thesis will also bring attention to the Czech contribution to sea turtle conservation, their practices in daily work and problem-solving in sea turtle conservation. Information obtained from in-depth interviews will be included in the chapter and will be referred to as needed. Lastly, this thesis will touch on dealing with the issue of different perceptions of sea turtle conservation and the importance of working with local communities.

The practical part will be conducted as five in-depth interviews with people from the Czech Republic who are part of sea turtle conservation. In-depth interviews are a one-on-one conversation which gives the space needed for detailed answers. Participants can explain feelings, stories and values in great detail. They can give more context and explain their perspective. (Rutledge and Hogg 2020) Since the interviews aim to find the initial motivation for work in sea turtle conservation as well as give a better insight into the daily work of sea turtle activists, the chosen method was in-depth interviews. It is the best way to explore their

initial motivation to work in sea turtle conservation and their daily work as well as provide background information.

Chapter 1, Literature review, will provide an overview of pertinent literature related to sea turtle conservation and the motivation of activists. Chapter 2 will shed light on the endangerment of sea turtles in Indonesia and provide an overview of sea turtle conservation efforts in the country. Chapter 3 will provide information about the Czech contribution to sea turtle conservation in Indonesia. It will address topics such as the motivation of Czech activists for their work in Indonesia, their practices and daily work and lastly what challenges they face in sea turtle conservation and how they overcome them. Chapter 4 will tackle the problem of different perceptions of sea turtle conservation which will be divided into two subcategories. One of them will outline the issue of local perception of sea turtle conservation and international perception. The other one will emphasise the importance of working with local communities to avoid unpleasant situations that may arise because of the different perspectives on sea turtle conservation. Chapter 5, the practical part, will concern participants selected for the interviews, the method of conducting the practical part and lastly the analysis of in-depth interviews.

1. Literature review

Sea turtles are animals which are facing the danger of going extinct. Not only they are popular in the activists' world, but they are also an iconic animal seen as charismatic, have aesthetic appeal and people have become aware that they are an endangered species. People from all over the world travel to places, where sea turtles nest and are trying to eliminate the possibility of this animal completely disappearing. While this topic is discussed worldwide, extant research has not focused on the motivation of activists from countries that have no access to the sea or sea turtles specifically. This literature review will include studies which cover topics such as threats to sea turtles, the relationship between humans and sea turtles and the practices of sea turtle conservation. Some of the studies do not necessarily focus on Indonesia, however, if the information provided in these studies is relatable to the topic of this BA thesis, I will refer to them as needed.

While numerous studies have examined how sea turtle conservation is carried out, this study focuses on volunteers from regions with limited access to sea turtle environments to reveal their specific roles within conservation. The complex landscape of sea turtle preservation must be addressed in developing a comprehensive understanding of what prompts turtle conservationists into action. While scholarly studies have tackled various sea turtle species, this exploration avoids focusing solely on one species. Instead, it zooms in on the Kalimantan region and its associated sea turtle conservation workforce. Thus, this BA thesis sheds light on the motivations and practices of Czech Republic activists who have willingly engaged themselves in Indonesia to contribute to the preservation endeavours concerning sea turtles.

Threats to Sea Turtles

Sea turtles are endangered animals that have to endure a variety of perils which, in most cases, are caused by humans. In a study done in 1999, we can see that sea turtles face a lot of challenges that involve unsustainable harvest for meat, shell, oil, skins and eggs. Not only that but also there is a high risk of turtles getting stuck in active or abandoned fishing gear. Oil spills, chemical waste, persistent plastic and other trash, dense coastal development, and increased ocean-based tourism have all harmed or destroyed crucial nesting beaches and feeding places of sea turtles. (Eckert et al. 1999) In his article, Nijman says that turtles are traded for their meat. (Nijman 2009) However, not only meat is why sea turtles are being captured. Usually, their shells are made into jewellery that can be later sold at a market as a souvenir. Some people steal sea turtles' eggs, either for their own consumption or for profit and others use the eggs as a part

of their traditions. In a study from 2010 by Donlan C. we can see that these challenges are ongoing. Experts were asked to fill out a survey regarding anthropogenic hazards to sea turtle populations at a regional level. There was a total of 224 respondents and according to the data provided, the most hazardous for sea turtles are fisheries bycatch and coaster development. Global warming along with pathogens were ranked lower, meaning less hazardous. The results of this survey suggest that, despite the lack of survey data from decades ago on how sea turtle researchers and conservationists perceived anthropogenic threats to sea turtles, they now consistently recognise sea turtles as being at risk from a variety of threats, including at-sea threats, fisheries bycatch in particular. (Donlan et al. 2010) While this survey put global warming as one of the lowest risks for sea turtles, some of the new studies rank it higher. For example, an article from 2023 brings up the topic of sea levels rising and potentially flooding turtle nests and making it overall harder for turtles to live. (Rivas et al. 2023)

Different Views on Sea Turtle Conservation

There are a variety of different views on sea turtle conservation and the involvement of volunteers in this endeavour. The most common critique that volunteers often have to deal with is the argument that sea turtles have been fine without human interference. However, according to Cambell, it is not possible to stay aside now, since people are now part of the sea turtle environment. So, volunteers have to balance human-nature relationships by enlarging the connection between humans and nature rather than distancing from it. (Cornwell and Campbell 2012). Since this is the case, it leads us to question if sea turtle conservation is a colonial construct and if so, how to change it so it does not seem like so. (Shanker et al. 2023) It is also important to mention that sea turtles are very privileged endangered animals since nowadays a lot of people seem to care for them, however, what about other animals that do not receive such attention?

Sea Turtle Conservation Practices

Some studies show us the practices of sea turtle conservation and give us a good insight as to what the job of activists looks like. Monitoring sea turtles occurs both on land and in water. We can see a great example of how monitoring sea turtles on land is managed in a paper by Nastiti: “Green turtle conservation activities include a number of different stages, such as laying eggs, egg removal, hatching, hatchling removal, temporary storage and release of hatchlings into the sea. From sunset the “Pangumbahan beach” green turtle conservation guards start securing the nesting beach. Around 06:30 pm, when green turtles land on the beach, green turtle

conservation guards begin to eliminate disturbances (such as sound, light, ground vibration) to prepare the beach for nesting time. According to Nastiti and Wiadnyana (2012), the process of laying eggs, of green turtle takes about 2-3 hours.” (Nastiti, Satria, and Wiadnyana 2015) Nests are occasionally relocated in order to shield nests from dangers including human harvesting, beach erosion, predators, and high beach traffic. (Cornwell and Campbell 2012).

Monitoring Sea Turtles in Water

While there is a lot of literature exploring monitoring sea turtles on land, there are only few which detailly explain the process of monitoring in the water. Sometimes, recreational divers are used for monitoring sea turtles. However, since usually divers lack marine turtle species identification skills they often do not identify the species making the monitoring unreliable. (Williams et al. 2015) Studies usually do not include divers as a monitoring source and divers are then overlooked. Only a few papers showed interest in divers. A conference poster focusing on the Derawan archipelago provides information about divers helping monitor sea turtles. However, the data on this poster is from 2015 and may no longer be up to date. In view of this, it might be advisable to pay more attention to divers because they could bring better insight into the condition of sea turtles. Not only they can monitor the amount of sea turtles but also monitor their condition, use of habitat or map their migration route. Monitoring in water can also uncover possible threats that could be unseen otherwise.

The Tension Between Practices of Volunteers and Traditional Practices

When observing the methods of monitoring sea turtles in water, it becomes clear that tensions between international conservation practices and local traditions have a significant impact on shaping conservation efforts. Extent research has shown us that the priorities of locals may differ from the priorities of people coming to different countries to work in sea turtle conservation. For example, Bajau people who live in the Berau district in east Kalimantan used to share their lives with sea turtles. Sea turtles used to be very connected to their traditions. However, this special relationship between the Bajau people and turtles was disrupted by international sea turtle organisations because their idea of a good relationship with turtles differs from the one the Bajau people have. The women of the Bajau people cared for the baby turtles and saved every tenth nest because the fisheries would give them money for every baby turtle release. Which means they were basically part of conservation as well. They had their practices and used the turtles for their traditions and to make money but they still cared for the sea turtles. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) Even though people from different countries came there to

help with sea turtle conservation with good intentions, the local community did not appreciate it because it was an intrusion into their culture. Some studies draw attention to this problem. Shanker brings up the topic of local communities working with volunteers and claims it is not easy to recruit local people to work for a public institution because they do not have the needed education. (Shanker et al. 2023)

The Role of the Indonesian Government in Sea Turtle Conservation

Since local communities are not easy to recruit for sea turtle conservation originating abroad because of their lack of education, the Indonesian government plays a crucial part in protecting sea turtles while including local people. Several studies have dealt with the role of the Indonesian government in sea turtle conservation. For example, between the years 2019 - 2021, a study was carried out in an education centre in Bali opened by the Indonesian government, which made a purposive sampling of 60 tourists. This sampling provides information about the level of education of tourists on the topic of endangered sea turtles. This education centre in Bali is trying to eliminate the illegal trade of sea turtles in Indonesia and has been open since 2006. It was made mainly for tourists to learn about sea turtle conservation and eco-tourism but it is also for locals so they will not illegally trade sea turtles. (Nurhayati, Putra, and Supriatna 2022). Another example of the Indonesian government taking part in sea turtle conservation is the monitoring in the Sukabumi district in West Java. According to Adriani Sri Nastiti, the hatching rate of sea turtles has improved, indicating that progress has been made and the hatching number has increased since 2008. Monitoring was carried out from 2008 to 2011, revealing the rate of increase under the Sukabumi administration. It is compared to monitoring from 2001 to 2007, which was managed by a private company. The Chief of Sukabumi District charged the marine affairs and fisheries service with responsibility for management operations. They also collaborate with universities and research institutes (Wiadnyana and Nastiti 2013). However, this study aimed to show the improvement in the hatching rate of sea turtles in Sukabumi district. Nonetheless, the information provided in this study shows us to what extent the government is involved.

Motivation of Landlocked Volunteers in Sea Turtle Conservation Work

As said before, non-governmental organisations from different countries come to places with easy access to the sea such as Indonesia because it is where sea turtles are. However, what exactly motivates them to care for an animal that does not live in their country? The motivations of people working to protect sea turtles vary widely. Campbell draws on motivations that stem

from broader issues such as conservation conflicts, environmental justice or economic incentives. It suggests that volunteers have already been interested in these topics, leading them to sea turtle conservation. (Campbell 2010) Moreover, volunteers working in sea turtle conservation are usually people who do not have enough opportunities to work with sea turtles in the country they are originally from or they moved across the world to work with sea turtles. For example, people from Europe would move to Indonesia to have easier access to sea turtles. The problem with people from other countries coming to different countries just to take care of sea turtles is that often they are not well educated about the culture of the people, the traditions and the communities that live there. (Shanker et al. 2023) Moreover, there is little research that addresses the complex reasons that motivate landlocked activists to engage in sea turtle conservation initiatives. In 2021 a study was done observing the motivation of landlocked volunteers to be part of sea turtle conservation. Shum et al. (2021), discovered that similar variables such as optimism, social impact, learning opportunities, and values alignment with the organisation supported the decision of the volunteers. (Shum et al. 2021) Nevertheless, there are not many studies focused on the people from the Czech Republic and their involvement in sea turtle conservation in Indonesia. To bridge this gap, this thesis will show the motivation and practices of people from the Czech Republic who are part of sea turtle conservation in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Extant research has mainly focused on the opinions on sea turtle conservation and the challenges sea turtles are facing. There has been a lot of research about different points of view on sea turtle conservation mainly how it affects local communities and how they view the conservation. Furthermore, a lot of research has been done on the way people in sea turtle conservation work and there has been detailed description of their work as well. Yet there has been little research done about the motivation of landlocked volunteers interested in sea turtle conservation. Even though there are some studies done on the motivation of people from landlocked countries for their work in sea turtle conservation there are not many explicitly concerning people from the Czech Republic. This BA thesis aims to fill this gap and shed light on the intentions of the volunteers and activists to engage in sea turtle conservation.

2. The need to protect sea turtles

Sea turtles are iconic reptiles living in sea and ocean waters. There are only seven sea turtle species in the world, with six of them found in the waters around Indonesia. Turtles are facing significant threats to their survival from both natural and human causes. Natural factors like coastline erosion, temperature change, and predators threaten sea turtles. Meanwhile, humans contribute to the problem through habitat deterioration, marine pollution, bycatch from fishing gear, and the use of turtle-derived materials such as meat, eggs, and carapace. (Utama, Pangesti, and Vatesia 2023) All around the world, turtles have become the symbol of marine conservation due to their appeal and importance in the ecosystem.

2.1. The endangerment of sea turtles in Indonesia

According to the World Wildlife Fund, the six species of sea turtles which inhabits the waters in Indonesia are Green Turtle (*Chelonia Mydas*), Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriaca*), Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Flatback Turtle (*Natator depressus*). (Ardiansyah, 2004) All of these species are facing the threat of going extinct. Some of the threats to sea turtles in Indonesia are climate change, bycatch, marine pollution, illegal trade and direct consumption and habitat loss.

Climate change is one of the reasons for sea level rise which threatens sea turtles since they would not have enough time to accommodate this change. It is predicted that by 2050 some sea turtle nesting habitats will be flooded. (Donlan 2010) That would result in extreme conditions for sea turtles, especially for those who have nests at open beaches. However, not many studies have been done on this matter so this information should be taken as a deterrent scenario.

Bycatch means that sea turtles are accidentally captured by nets and lines while fishing for different animals. Despite modern technologies and industry understanding of the problem, bycatch remains a significant concern. Not only can it result in preventable deaths and injuries, but the fishing methods can also be damaging to the marine areas in which they are used. (“What Is Bycatch? Understanding and Preventing Fishing Bycatch,” n.d.) Also, sea turtles are often included in the traditions of local people who live near the sea. However, they do not necessarily aim to harm sea turtles – they try to keep their tradition alive and sometimes, sea turtle conservation is part of the tradition, too. This can be seen in the practices of Bajau people.

Generally speaking, the Bajau people identify as an ethnolinguistic group of people who are spread throughout Southeast Asia's archipelago, which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022). Even though the Bajau of Kalimantan and Sulawesi people used to eat turtle eggs as a part of their wedding ceremony, the women saved every tenth nest and cared for the baby turtles. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) Not only their traditions are tightly connected to sea turtles but also their history was influenced by the places where sea turtles feed, mate, and lay eggs.

However, since sea turtles in Indonesia are intertwined with the people who live there, it is no wonder people continuously take from them. People hunt the animals for meat not only for their consumption or because of tradition, but also because of the need for money. Even though it is illegal in Indonesia to sell sea turtle eggs, they are still highly valued. Furthermore, bracelets and other jewellery are generally made from the carapax, or top layer, of the turtle shell. To extract the reptile's shell, a brutal procedure is followed: the turtle is nailed alive to a board, its upper layer is heated, and it is then peeled off its shell while still alive and returned to the sea. The animal will die from infection as a result of this exceedingly harsh and painful procedure. Another human activity that harms sea turtle life is the building of enormous hotel complexes or other lit structures, which confuse the turtles when they come onto the beach during the egg-laying season. This is because artificial light interferes with turtles' ability to orient themselves in space. (Čižmářová, 2020) It is evident that sea turtles in tourist locations encounter several difficulties. Places like Bali have a higher chance of influencing the life of sea turtles and how people, presumably tourists, behave towards them. However, Bali has acknowledged this problem and in 2006 opened a centre that educates tourists on that matter (Nurhayati, Putra, and Supriatna 2022). Nonetheless, the problem of baby sea turtles being put into small pools in centres which attract tourists persists. People working in such centres usually do not know much about sea turtles and therefore cannot properly take care of them without hurting them or lowering their chances for survival in the wild. Most of the time these centres are placed strategically near hotels and popular places so tourists can come and pay for releasing one of the baby turtles. Conservationists say that these centres are such dangerous places for sea turtles because they are being continuously supported by tourists – that is because a tourist will see the sign “sea turtle conservation centre” and think by going in and paying to release sea turtles they are doing something good. (Klembarová, row 149) They usually will not notice in what condition the sea turtles have to live and that they probably will not survive after being released due to the conditions they had to be in. This leads to the conclusion that the education

of not only the local communities but also tourists is crucial and plays a big role in sea turtle conservation.

2.2. Sea turtle conservation efforts in Indonesia

The conservation efforts in Indonesia include the government's input, non-governmental organisations and the efforts of local people.

In 1979 Indonesia joined CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) (Barr and Greenpeace International 2001), which is an international agreement between governments. Its goal is to guarantee that international trading in wild animal and plant specimens does not jeopardise the existence of the species. ("What Is CITES" n.d.) In 1981, all marine turtle species were listed as threatened with extinction in the CITES appendix, and all trade across international borders was prohibited. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) With the more comprehensive Act No. 5, Indonesia set the goal of "Conservation of living natural resources and their ecosystems" as its top priority in 1990. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) however, this regulation was not focused only on sea turtles. That changed in 1999 when a regulation (Government Regulation No. 7) made it illegal to catch and trade any species of sea turtles and their eggs. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) This brought more attention to sea turtle conservation. In 2005 Indonesia signed the Indian Ocean Southeast Asia Sea Turtle Memorandum of Understanding under the Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) The IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU is a non-binding agreement between Southeast Asian governments and the Indian Ocean region to conserve and protect sea turtles and their habitats. (Fisheries, n.d.) This decision was influenced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a non-governmental organization. (Pauwelussen and Swanson 2022) This demonstrates the significant role that non-governmental organizations play in the enactment of government regulations.

Due to their appeal, sea turtles are now the primary animals addressed when conservation is concerned. Non-governmental organisations from foreign countries come to places where sea turtles nest and do the conservation there. Indonesia is not an exception – as said before, many non-governmental organisations from foreign countries take an interest in continuing sea turtle conservation there. The most known is the Turtle Foundation and WWF.

However, because the majority of coastal regions in Indonesia that serve as nesting locations for turtles have been designated as protected areas, (Utama, Pangesti, and Vatesria 2023) the interest in the protection of sea turtles can be also seen in local people's conservation

efforts. On one hand, there are centres for education about sea turtles and the conservation of these animals. Such places can be found in many coastal regions for instance in Serangan or Tanjung Benoa. In Serangan, the conservation centre is called “The Turtle Conservation and Education Centre” and provides safe sea turtle hatching. In Tanjung Benoa, the centre called “Moon Cot Sari” claims to be a breeding and rehabilitation centre for sea turtles. Since in the past, Tanjung Benoa was known for consumption of the green turtle to the point it almost went extinct in Bali, it can seem that the conservation efforts are improving. (Utama, Pangesti, and Vatesia 2023) However, after researching both of the centres it is more likely these are places considered conservation, which ends up being more harmful to sea turtles than helpful. From the pictures online we can see sea turtles in small pools despite the positive feedback from the tourists. These baby turtles are placed in pools where they wait until they get released and until then, serve as a tourist attraction. That can affect their muscles negatively since there are no waves in the pool and due to that the muscles of the baby turtles do not develop strong enough. That can significantly lower their chances of survival in the wild. Not only that but there are also cases of carnivorous sea turtles being placed in a pool with a herbivorous sea turtles which then leads to one of them getting hurt. In such centres only seriously injured sea turtles with low chance of survival in the wild should be placed. (Morskezelvy, n.d.)

On the other hand, there are places which try to do the sea turtle conservation right. That could include monitoring, relocating the eggs or spreading the general idea of sea turtles and their endangerment. These centres can get support from conservationists and volunteers from other countries such as the Czech Republic. A Czech organisation called Chráníme Mořské Želvy focuses on these centres and provides them with free education on sea turtles and helps them financially. Not only the education of the local people is provided but also the education of the children. Through this, the programmes can manage future sustainability.

In conclusion, we can see that conservation efforts in Indonesia nowadays consist of government regulations, efforts from local people and communities and non-governmental organizations. Despite these efforts, conservation is still needed and likely will continue in the future.

3. Czech contribution to sea turtle conservation in Indonesia

Despite being a landlocked country, the Czech Republic is actively involved in marine life conservation, particularly when it comes to sea turtles. Apart from the zoos in the country, there are also organizations based in the Czech Republic that are dedicated to the preservation of sea turtles in Indonesia.

Many zoos in the Czech Republic contribute to sea turtle conservation, either by supporting organisations such as Lestari and Chráníme mořské želvy or by collaborating with Indonesian conservation centres or zoos. For Instance Zoo Ostrava collaborates with The Turtle Foundation which is a non-profit organization with an international reach, founded by a small group of individuals who share the common goal of preventing the extinction of endangered sea turtles. At present, the organization is running sea turtle conservation projects in collaboration with local communities in two countries - Indonesia and Cape Verde. The Turtle Foundation also has offices in several countries including Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and the USA. (Zoo Ostrava, n.d.) Another example of zoos contributing to sea turtle conservation is Zoo Brno which alongside The Union of Czech and Slovak Zoos and Indonesian non-profit organisation has established the Kura Kura Centre on Nusa Penida Island to raise awareness about the threats facing freshwater and sea turtles. (Zoo Brno, n.d.) However, after looking deeper into this centre, it seems as if the project ended with the last report being from the year 2021. In this report, the project claimed to have established a collaboration with an Indonesian Zoo called Batu Secet, however, due to the pandemic COVID-19 were unable to meet in person. It can be assumed the partnership never took place. There is no new information on this project.

Many projects concerning sea turtles were founded in the Czech Republic. For example, Lestari, Justice for Nature or Chráníme mořské želvy. Lestari was founded in 2014 by Czech researchers and conservationists to promote and fund conservation efforts, particularly in Indonesia, to protect severely endangered animals and their habitats. In the 2023 report, Lestari said that conservation, genetic research on sea turtles and monitoring of sea turtles in Indonesia had been carried out. In collaboration with Zoo Brno and Zoo Liberec, four green turtles in Aceh and West Sumatra were fitted with satellite transmitters to monitor their migration routes. (Lestari, n.d.)

When it comes to Justice for Nature, it is a non-profit organization dedicated to conservation through direct action and education for youth and the public. Part of the organization is a program called Blue Life which was established in the Pulau Banyak

archipelago on the island of Sikandang in North Sumatra in 2017. From 2019 to 2020, they had their anti-poaching patrol called Blue Patrol which operated on Bangkaru Island to protect sea turtles from poaching. However, they have now shifted their focus to supporting the education of children in the fishing village of Ujung Sialit on Tuangku Island. (JusticeForNature, 2023)

The "Chráníme Mořské Želvy" project, in partnership with local organisations, is working towards protecting beaches from poachers in three different areas. These areas include two in Indonesia, Lembata Island in the southeast and Denawan Island in the south of Borneo, as well as one area in the south of Sri Lanka near Dikwella. The primary aim of this project is to protect sea turtles and their habitats from illegal activities. They protected turtles on Bilang-bilangan and Mataha islands in Berau, Indonesia for five years. Presently, they concentrate on educating and developing local people. (Morskezelvy, n.d.)

3.1. Motivation of Czech activists for their work in Indonesia

The motivation behind contributing to sea turtle conservation varies, from admiration for their cuteness to a general interest in marine life. Since the Czech Republic is a landlocked country, a lot of people travel to spend holidays by the sea making it not so unfamiliar to them which can spark an interest in sea turtles or marine life in general. Also, interest in land turtles can form at a young age by seeing them in a Zoo or simply having them as a pet which then can spark interest in sea turtles as well. This admiration can lead to a path when one realises that sea turtles are endangered and, feeling sympathy, wants to help as much as possible. Such interest can be a leading point when choosing a field of study. However, the motivation to care for sea turtles does not necessarily have to arise from a childhood interest. One can be interested in all marine life and thus choose an appropriate field of study to broaden the knowledge of their interest which can then narrow it down to interest in sea turtles. Moreover, universities can offer various volunteering programs which can be focused on sea turtle conservation and motivate the students to get to know more about these creatures. Students, who already went to some volunteering programs could be a great motivation, too. Their stories and experiences can bring attention to the endangerment of sea turtles. Lastly, the people in conservation programs such as Chráníme Mořské Želvy and their enthusiasm for the protection of sea turtles can also be a huge motivating factor. Giving lectures in schools and educating children about sea turtles could potentially result in the recruitment of new future volunteers.

What keeps the activists motivated is not only seeing the animals in good condition but also seeing the change around them. With sea turtle conservation the change is not immediate

and cannot be seen quickly, however, due to monitoring, activists can say how many sea turtles hatched with their help. “We claim, and it's true, that we have released over 4.5 million turtles into the sea, calculated from the number of cracked shells in the nests, as the turtles that went on their own were also counted, and we helped those that couldn't make it by themselves,” says Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová (row 202) about her project in Indonesia.

3.2. Practices and daily work of sea turtle activists from the Czech Republic

The daily work of sea turtle activists can be divided into two categories: fieldwork and off-field work. Fieldwork consists of several activities done in Indonesia such as collection of plastic waste around the beaches, education of local people, mapping sea turtle centres and monitoring sea turtle nesting sites – which is done every day, multiple times. Off-field work involves work that is still focused on sea turtle conservation in Indonesia but is carried out in the territory of the Czech Republic.

Proper education is essential for fieldwork to maintain sea turtle conservation without relying on activists. Activists hold lectures for locals, teaching them about sea turtles. Local people are being taught about why sea turtles are an important part of the ecosystem and should be protected. Sea turtles are not the only topic they are taught about, but activists also tackle the topics of basic marine knowledge. The goal is to educate local people because they are the ones who can continue the work if the organization stops having money for the salaries of conservationists. Another relevant activity done by volunteers and activists in the field is mapping sea turtle centres. This is conducted by finding the centres which have the potential to do sea turtle conservation right and establish cooperation with the organisation. These centres are then visited and activists examine the conditions under which the baby turtles are kept. After this, a report with recommendations and ideas for improvement is created. (Bílková, row 41) If the sea turtle centre is willing to improve, a collaboration is considered. Activists also monitor sea turtle nesting sites to see if the sea turtles lay eggs without problems. They patrol the beach once at eleven and once at three or four in the morning, searching for eggs. If eggs are found, they relocate the eggs to hatcheries. Sea turtles can lay eggs in places easily accessible to animals that are likely to be a threat. Monitoring and keeping up with how many sea turtles come and lay eggs and how many eggs are relocated is also essential for future reference. If sea turtles hatch, they are released the next morning or afternoon. (Bílková, row 48) All of this work is done while collaborating with local people. Such collaboration can lead to sustainability of the conservation as we can see in southern Borneo. According to Mgr. Hana Svobodová, the

conservationists who work in the sea turtle conservation there, are local people who happen to live on the island. Essentially, they work every day by going on patrols, moving eggs to safety if needed and releasing baby sea turtles. Rangers also count the cracked egg shells, the turtles that arrived and how many of them actually laid eggs. (Svobodová, row 212) All of this information is then recorded and sent to the Chráníme Mořské Želvy organisation.

Off-field work refers to the conservation efforts which take place in the Czech Republic but have a focus on sea turtle conservation in Indonesia. Activists involved in this work do not have direct contact with sea turtles but instead work with people in the Czech Republic. Despite being focused on Indonesia, many organisations put a lot of effort into educating people in the Czech Republic about sea turtles. This is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of the projects, as educating people in the Czech Republic can help to maintain interest in volunteering and increase funding. Activities in the Czech Republic, such as lectures for children in schools, are important for fundraising. In the case of organisations such as Chráníme Mořské Želvy the money raised from such lectures goes towards the conservationists in Indonesia. These conservationists are local people employed to help with sea turtle conservation efforts in exchange for a salary.

However, sea turtle conservation can also be done a little bit differently. A perfect example is Tomáš Ouhel and František Příbrský who are fighting against the illegal trade of animals in Indonesia. Naturally, one of those animals is sea turtles which are still being hunted for their eggs and meat. Alongside their team from an organisation called “Lestari” they uncovered a network of smugglers and employed local poachers as conservationists who then lectured the local children about sea turtles. (Prokeš, 2023) However, this way of doing sea turtle conservation may lead to arguments between local people and the activists and therefore lead to dangerous situations which makes it not so common way of doing sea turtle conservation.

3.3. Tackling problems and finding solutions in sea turtle conservation

Conservation efforts for sea turtles in the field can be quite challenging. Most organisations work in cooperation with local communities, making communication a crucial aspect of problem-solving. However, off-field work has its own set of challenges due to the lack of real-life interaction.

Considering that cooperation with local communities is a crucial part of sea turtle conservation, one should be able to understand their language and culture to avoid misunderstandings. In Indonesia, there are more than seven hundred languages spoken with one

language uniting them all which is Bahasa Indonesia. (“Indonesia | Ethnologue Free” n.d.) During the interviews when asked about problems in sea turtle conservation, some of the activists listed not knowing the language well enough was an obstacle. For instance, Petra Klembarová who was a volunteer for sea turtle conservation in Sri Lanka had to communicate with local people in English since she lacked the knowledge of their language. Nevertheless, the level of English of the local people was not adequate. The communication hurdle was tackled by spending more time on site and adapting to the speech patterns of the locals in Sri Lanka. (Klembarová, row 64) However, this obstacle consumed a significant amount of valuable time, which is usually scarce for volunteers. Having proficiency in the local language could accelerate the resolution of issues.

Moreover, communication obstacles may occur despite being familiar with the language. Activists from the Czech Republic usually are not in the field all the time and thus have to overcome problems from afar. Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová shared a story of tackling one of these problems from a distance. In Borneo, where the sea turtle conservation takes place, she made arrangements with the locals to send her data consisting of the number of hatched clutches. After a while, she noticed odd-looking data and contacted the rangers in Indonesia. Although it was explained several times, working with Excel spreadsheets was confusing for them. Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová believes going there and showing them would be easier and the problem would be resolved immediately rather than trying to tackle it through an online conversation. (Svobodová, row 281) Respecting and understanding the culture of the area where sea turtle conservation efforts are taking place is essential for activists and volunteers. By seeking to understand the perspectives of the locals, issues can be addressed more quickly and smoothly, leading to more effective solutions. A great example is another story which was shared by Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová during the interview. When she was volunteering in Java the local conservationists there had a problem with monkeys coming to a fenced area where sea turtle eggs were. The monkeys would eat the eggs and local conservationists would shoot slingshots to try chasing them away. Even though the solution of putting a net above to keep the monkeys out of the area seems easy from our point of view, the local conservationists did not come up with it. Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová then got an idea to compare this issue with drinking coffee – Indonesians put a lid on their cup of coffee to protect it from bugs and flies. She asked them if something similar to this would be possible to apply to the fenced area. “First, they thought of a roof, and then we suggested using a net so the rain could get inside. The next day, they enthusiastically went to get the net, and it was done immediately. But I believe if I scolded them, it wouldn't have worked out that way.” concludes Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová

the story. (Svobodová, row 93) Different cultural aspects are also a big challenge. As Mgr. Eva Bílková said education is provided where the education makes sense. She gave an example of working with people in a fishing village who cannot catch fish anymore because they ruined the reef with dynamite. Eva said: “We tried to explain to them that by rebuilding the reef, the fish will return, but they have to fish sustainably and in small quantities, which they don't understand. They don't understand why whales and coral are connected; there, education makes complete sense.” (Bílková, row 108) The objective for both parties is similar thus cooperation seems like the best solution. However, in places, such as Lamalera which is a village in Lembata where it is legal to hunt whales (“Lamalera: Traditional Whale Hunt on Flores - Indonesia Travel” n.d.), the education does not make sense. There, the different perspective of marine life is influenced by tradition. In such a place conservation would be too difficult to maintain, however, Mgr. Eva Bílková believes that tourism and the provision of alternative jobs could potentially change this. (Bílková, row 114)

Doing conservation in a different country means the activists may encounter difficult situations such as disputes over land ownership. For example, Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová brought up an obstacle which occurred quite recently. In Lembata, the organisation Chráníme Mořské Želvy had a land which was given to them by the mayor. However, in summer 2023 a man from another village came and claimed the land saying it was his. He taped off the land and prohibited people from going there even though the organisation was the one who signed the contract for the land. Even though the mayor was notified of this issue, he did not want to meet and resolve the issue in an attempt to avoid any conflict. Therefore, tackling this hurdle is extremely challenging. Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová said this problem is yet to be resolved. (Svobodová, row 265)

In conclusion, it can be said that while sea turtle conservation done in a different country is extremely challenging and requires respect, understanding and a lot of time, the problems that arise can be overcome with cooperation and communication. Resolving issues in sea turtle conservation both online and offline is time-consuming, however, is an integral part of conservation as a whole.

4. Perception of sea turtle conservation

4.1. Local and international perception of sea turtle conservation

It is important to consider the various perspectives regarding sea turtle conservation because since it has become a symbol for many other conservation efforts, it faces a lot of criticism. Shanker et al. (2023) compare sea turtle conservation with colonialism and while showing a new perspective on sea turtle conservation, Shanker et al. also bring up points for reflection. According to the article, people who are part of sea turtle conservation appear to move predominantly in one direction—from the Global North to the Global South which in retrospect makes sense since those are the places where sea turtles are found. Early sea turtle research was conducted by outsiders, typically of European ancestry, who rarely engaged with local communities, rather than by people whose ancestors had lived with turtles for generations. (Shanker et al.) This then leads us to a problematic part of sea turtle conservation and its collision between practices and perceptions of local people and foreigners. The practices and priorities of the people from privileged institutions may not share the same priorities as the communities they interact with. Even though local people may accept being part of sea turtle conservation led by foreigners in exchange for a salary, it does not necessarily mean they are interested in sea turtles. To give a direct example, Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová stated that local people often ask her why she cares for sea turtles so much and why she is not saving animals in the Czech Republic. (Svobodová, row 325) Hana's response was an explanation as to why sea turtles are a crucial part of the ecosystem. Although we can assume local people would then understand the different perceptions, according to the article by Shanker et al. it may not be the case. Local people may not see why activists are concerned about such an animal and simply may not share the same enthusiasm about scientific research done on sea turtles. In such cases, conservationists then implement environmental education as a tool to create new values for local communities to ensure the future sustainability of conservation projects. However, this attempt to project the values of the conservationists onto local people may end up disregarding their traditions. From the conservationist's point of view, the consumption of turtle eggs and meat is inappropriate and does not comply with sea turtle conservation methods. Nevertheless, these assumptions are strictly made by foreigners' values and the traditions of the local people are thus ignored. (Shanker et al., 2023) These types of situations can create a negative perception of conservation efforts among local communities. This happens when outsiders who have not previously lived in the area are involved in decision-making without

considering the local people's traditions and historical background.

Now the question arises: how can this issue be resolved so that both local people and conservationists can look at things from the same angle and contribute to sea turtle conservation without neglecting both party's values and traditions? Despite the harsh start of labelling sea turtle conservation as a new form of colonization, Shanker et al. make a good point: When designing and conducting research, conservationists should take into account traditional knowledge and other sources of information. They should also utilise models that include various knowledge systems in the planning and execution of projects. (Shanker et al., 2023)

4.2. Importance of working with local communities

Cooperation with local people is an essential part of every conservation. It provides a better understanding of their perception and can be a way to avoid or limit unwanted arguments or situations.

As previously stated, sea turtles are often closely associated with local communities. The traditions of these communities may involve the consumption of sea turtle eggs or other sea turtle-related practices. While such traditions can be detrimental to sea turtle populations, they are also an integral part of the culture of these local communities. Therefore, going there and simply taking away their old traditions would be inappropriate. Moreover, local communities are the people living with sea turtles for the longest – they know the best about where sea turtles nest, when they nest and how the gangs of poachers operate. Poachers are always local people thus it is crucial to get into the core of the problem as to why are people stealing sea turtle eggs or killing them for their shells. Is it because of their tradition or because of the need for money? By collaborating with local communities conservationists can get better insight into these issues and work with them accordingly. If given the chance, local people are willing to become a part of sea turtle conservation, too in exchange for a salary. If they get employed by organisations they will not have the reason to steal eggs or make jewellery out of sea turtles' shells. In addition, they could be given the opportunity to start creating jewellery or other small items from materials such as coconuts or wood and with the help of non-profit organisations sell them to either people in foreign countries or to tourists that come to Indonesia.

Education of local communities is also a part of the collaboration. Not only the education of children is what matters but it is also the education of everyone. For instance, if poachers are educated and then employed, the word can get around and other people may get

interested in sea turtle conservation rather than poaching the eggs. By supporting local people who were already interested in sea turtle conservation but did not know how to approach it, the conservation efforts can expand. It is also crucial to hear the voices of local priorities and concerns and who else can be the voice if not local people? Education of children can also lead to the future sustainability of conservation since children can convey knowledge about marine turtles and their endangerment to their parents and can be very influential.

By collaborating with local people the conservation of sea turtles can become a tradition that could be passed on to other generations. This will not only benefit future projects but also the conservation of marine life as a whole.

5. Practical part

5.1. Participants profiles

Mgr. Eva Bílková is a PhD student in biology at the University of Ostrava, thanks to which she got to Indonesia as a volunteer. She is currently helping as a volunteer coordinator in the organization Chráníme mořské želvy. She also helps with the media coverage of the project.

Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová is a biologist and founder of the Chráníme mořské želvy organisation. She has been working on sea turtle conservation since 2004. Direct protection of sea turtles is carried out on the island of Lembata, in the southeast of Indonesia and also in Sri Lanka. In the Czech Republic, she tries to raise awareness about sea turtles by organizing lectures and giving interviews.

Petra Klembarová is a biology student and a volunteer in a project called Chráníme mořské želvy. She learned about the project via her former class teacher in 2021 and contacted Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová, and has been working on events and raising awareness ever since. Recently, she went to Sri Lanka to help monitor the sea turtle conservation situation there.

Lucie Čizmářová, MSc focuses on environmental concerns, particularly the problem of wildlife trafficking. In addition to her work as a field zookeeper at Olomouc Zoo, Lucie is also a Veterinary Care and Welfare Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator for the Kukang Rescue Program and a photographer for the Stolen Wildlife Program.

Zbyněk Hrábek dedicated five years to the protection of sea turtles on Bangkaru Island in the Pulau Banyak archipelago. He focused on monitoring and protection of sea turtle nesting sites, as well as anti-poaching patrols in the ocean. He exposed and apprehended several poachers, and disrupted the trade in turtle eggs and meat.

5.2. Method: Conducting In-depth Interviews

Rather than gathering objective facts, in-depth interviews aim to explore the subjective character of people's stories. The goal of in-depth interviews is to determine what interpretations of events and stories reveal about perceptions, values, and meanings of situations and people. Data collection and analysis become increasingly focused on subjective perceptions, interpretations, and understandings. (Minichiello et al. 2004) This method was chosen because

it gives the best insight not only into the initial interest in sea turtle conservation of people from landlocked countries but it also provides detailed information about their work, experiences and struggles. Due to the participants having been asked the same questions, all the information obtained can be compared to each other.

Participants were selected by purposive sampling which means they were purposively asked to be interviewed and not randomly chosen. The participants selected were five people from the Czech Republic all with a background of sea turtle conservation. While four of them were focused mainly on sea turtle conservation in Indonesia, one participant had experience only with conservation in Sri Lanka. While it may seem unnecessary to include it in this thesis, the interview gave a better insight into work in sea turtle conservation as a volunteer. Three of the other four people are still actively involved in sea turtle conservation with one not focused only on sea turtles.

The participants were asked twelve open-ended questions so they could provide detailed answers. The opening question was: what has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation? Then, the interviewees were asked to tell how their journey in sea turtle conservation started. After this, they were asked: Which personal connections or experiences have prompted you to focus on sea turtle conservation in Indonesia? The fourth question was: What values are particularly important to you that have influenced your work in Indonesia? The following two questions involved the Ministry of Environment in the Czech Republic. More specifically how did the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic's support for the sea turtle conservation project in Indonesia influence your decision to get involved? And: What role does the Ministry of Environment play in your current work? The next two questions were: What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like? and which challenges do you face in your daily work? Then, the participants were asked to reflect on their work in Indonesia: To what extent have your motivations and expectations been fulfilled? The next question tackled the work with local communities: How do you view your work with communities? The following one raised a question of providing long-term sustainability: How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both in terms of environmental impact and financial support? Finally, the last question was: What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get involved in sea turtle protection in Indonesia?

The interviews were conducted via video call with two interviews lasting around forty minutes. One interview lasted around eighty minutes and the last two interviews were conducted through questions online since both participants were in the field. Interviews with

Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová, Mgr. Eva Bílková and Petra Klembarová were conducted in November 2023. Zbyněk Hrábek and Lucie Čižmářová, MSc were interviewed in early 2024.

All participants agreed to be interviewed, either verbally or in an online conversation. All of them were made aware of the topic of the thesis, the name of the thesis and the constitution the thesis falls under.

5.3. Analysis of in-depth interviews

This thesis aims to point out the initial interest in sea turtle conservation of people from a landlocked country and to become familiar with their daily practices. Thus, the opening question the interviewees were asked concerned what was that sparked an interest in sea turtle conservation.

As said before, the motivation to participate in sea turtle conservation varies and is individual, however, two interviewees had similar starting points. Their motivation was primarily based on their field of work or study, meaning for them sea turtles were not the initial interest. When Lucie Čižmářová started her conservation journey, the main concern was not sea turtles, but rather the fight against illegal animal trade in Indonesia. In the case of Petra Klembarová, her initial participation also does not stem from interest towards sea turtles but it is rooted in her field of study. Field of study and field of work can be quite influential since there are plenty of opportunities for people to get to know and care about sea turtles. For instance, Mgr. Eva Bílková became interested in sea turtle conservation after participating in a volunteer project initiated by her university. This, and also stories of other people who are part of the sea turtle conservation was what motivated her to take part in it, too.

I study biology, so turtles have always appealed to me because I love the sea and I go to the sea a lot. Even though we are land creatures, I am fond of the sea. However, my greatest interest was sparked by following the stories of people who protect turtles on social media and television, as there are many of them. (Bílková, row 2)

Seeing how conservation works in a different country often leads to being interested in contributing to it somehow. Zbyněk Hrábek said that seeing the wildlife in Indonesia and how poorly the conservation there is managed was what sparked an interest to care not only for sea turtles but for all endangered animals and nature in general. The only participant whose initial motivation stemmed from love for sea turtles and desire to care for them was Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová, who said she always loved turtles and even got a land tortoise as a child. Such

interest then led her to participate in volunteering programs focused on sea turtles and from there got her to Indonesia.

My parents say that when I was only two years old, I used to bring snails home and that animals with little houses were what interested me. At the age of six, I begged for a land turtle in exchange for good grades, and I still have it to this day. So, I think that's it. Later, I read about them and found out that some species are endangered, and something threatens them, so I wanted to help them. (Svobodová, row 2)

Therefore, motivation can arise from various reasons that can be further enhanced with additional knowledge. One can start by contributing to the conservation of endangered animals, with the option to later focus solely on sea turtles, or vice versa.

The most reoccurring theme in the answers of the interviewees was the importance of working with local communities. The mention of cooperation with local people was present in the answers to questions not necessarily focused on such an issue. For instance, when asked about what values are important for the conservationists, three of the participants included cooperation with local communities as one of them. Therefore it can be said such cooperation is highly valued amongst conservationists and is ranked as one of the most important. To summarize, all the responses addressed cultural differences and emphasized the importance of patience and respect.

When asked about the cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, only one participant stated that they are in contact with them. Others were not in active contact with the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic nor it has influenced their work in Indonesia.

It is a foreign country with its government, and laws and Indonesians are very sensitive to being influenced by foreign governments. What would probably play a role is to support conservation programs in Indonesia, but that involves a lot of tiresome bureaucracy. In the end, a well-intentioned person loses a lot of time and energy to other things. (Hrábek, row 47)

As said before, the daily work includes the work off-field and in-field. The work off-field refers to the work that is done from the Czech Republic but still focuses on Indonesia. According to the interviewees, the off-field work is equally important as the work in the field since it raises an awareness of sea turtles and their endangerment but also it is essential for raising money for the conservation project.

So, the stay there is usually a reward for me because here it's something completely invisible. But one has to raise money, do lectures everywhere, in schools and for the public. Negotiate collaborations like "Zelená domácnost" – it's a store with eco-friendly products, and they give us two percent of the purchase when someone chooses to help the non-profit. "Chráněná dílna" sews plush turtles, and when they sell them, they donate some amount to us. So, these things need to be negotiated to secure salaries for the conservationists and then handle their accounting. It's a lot about emails and communication, so that's the routine work here. (Svobodová, row 247)

Outside the field, meaning here in the Czech Republic, there are occasional lectures; for example, we had one on Thursday, and I had one last week. I respond daily to emails from volunteers because I am responsible for all Indonesian volunteers for sea turtle conservation. I communicate with them, have various online calls with potential candidates, and have created several manuals on obtaining visas, buying tickets, what it's like there, what the Indonesians are like, what they are not like, and so on. I also organize some fundraising events, and meetings with volunteers – that's ongoing. I also frequently communicate with locals because I have close acquaintances in many Indonesian communities, so when something needs to be arranged, we call each other and solve everything. (Bílková, row 55)

The work from the Czech Republic depends on raising money, and cooperating with other projects and organisations and requires a lot of time behind the scenes. However, the work in the field can feel more rewarding as one sees the efforts in real-time. Such conservation efforts include monitoring, mapping centres, cooperation with local people, education and cleaning the beaches. Even though the field work can differ from place to place, the education of the local communities was a recurring theme among the interviewees.

In the field, there is some teaching happening, like in the morning, where I either prepare for the classes or teach simple things within the local community. Mostly, the teaching takes place in the afternoon, either at the school or in some recreational space. It involves children, adults, basically everyone. That's the way of helping in the field. (Eva Bílková, row 41)

When someone asked me for the first time, "All right, we understand that turtles are important in the sea, they are endangered, but what should I do when my dad brings home turtle eggs for dinner?" I was a bit stunned because what can you answer? No child will send their dad to prison for five years. At that moment, I turned the question back to them, "What would

you do?" they argued for about fifteen minutes and then said they would tell their parents that they wouldn't eat it, that they didn't want it. And I found this to be the best answer because when you tell your parents five times that you won't eat something, they won't bring it the sixth time. I think that's the best they could come up with. So, education, in my opinion, has great value, and a significant purpose. (Svobodová, row 132)

The mention of education was not necessarily brought up only when asked about their daily practices in the field. When asked about the importance of working with local communities, most of the conservationists listed education as one of them.

It is also important to educate about conservation and this is best started by the youngest children, which is why we run an English-environmental school "Kukang School" under our programme. (Čižmářová, row 72)

Also, education was considered one of the most significant factors for the future sustainability of the conservation projects.

I've already mentioned it; it's environmental education plus, of course, interventions in the landscape for some long-term impact – this is related to education. I believe that sustainability will be ensured through the support of local residents and the development of local communities. (Bilková, row 120)

All the participants agreed that working with communities is the most critical aspect of sea turtle conservation as it is tied to education. They believe that collaboration and education of the local communities can lead to positive changes.

Then, education is crucial for me because I think if we stopped having money for conservationists, for their salaries, poachers would return. But poachers are always local people, so if we educate them in the meantime, make them aware of why turtles are important and that it will help them if tourists come there because of them, it will be okay. (Svobodová, row 124)

However, working with communities is not just about educating them, but also understanding their culture and respecting them.

I see working with local communities as a priority for any conservation effort anywhere in the world. It is not possible to establish an open relationship with them in a short period of time. You have to get to know them, ensure you know how they live and what they do and try to understand them. After that, some strategy can be established on how to work with them, how

to educate them and work with them. In Indonesia, it's even more interesting because every community is different, they have their own language and customs or traditions. It's very interesting and diverse. (Hrábek, row 92)

Being part of a non-profit organisation usually consists of searching for volunteers who are willing to learn about conservation efforts and help. However, such understanding and respect are sometimes hard to convey to the volunteers.

When the director of a school in Borneo calls me and says it's great that the girl taught, but she didn't wear a bra under her shirt, it's a real problem. This is just difficult. These people must understand that they work with the local community and that it is essential, so they have to behave accordingly, not telling the locals to get used to it because they feel hot; that's just how it is, so such a person shouldn't go there. (Svobodová, row 382)

Therefore, mutual respect is a crucial factor when working in conservation in a foreign country. One should not go into such a project with many expectations but rather should stay proactive and have the will to learn and adapt. When asked about the expectations, the interviewees agreed that not having any high expectations is good. One cannot be prepared for everything and having big plans could result in negative experiences when failed to complete them.

In the beginning, one has big plans and a timetable, which is probably impossible to fulfil after getting into the Indonesian lifestyle. However, after time of learning about this diverse country and the complexities of the conservation approach, one changes a lot in style and goals and projects to be most effective in a given location/country. Long-term and sustainability is necessary, then positive changes can be achieved. (Čižmářová, row 65)

However, according to the participants, everyone can help and contribute to sea turtle conservation. Reaching out to a non-profit organisation can be the first step to being part of any conservation. Then, mental preparation is also essential as the countries with sea turtles or any other exotic animals are culturally different to the Czech Republic. Particularly, when working in Indonesia, one should be patient, not give up and have an open mind.

Without respect and understanding in Indonesia, a foreigner will not get far and will not help anything, thus refraining from arrogance, contempt and disrespect is very important. People here are very open and friendly and if one decides to help them, they appreciate it very

much. And let's face it, people are what is destroying nature, but they are also the only solution that can change it. (Hrábek, row 137)

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the motivation and daily work of sea turtle activists from the Czech Republic conducted by in-depth interviews with conservationists while shedding light on cooperation with local people and problem-solving in sea turtle conservation.

Firstly, this thesis researched the literature which addresses the topics of sea turtle conservation, work with communities, different perceptions of sea turtle conservation and the endangerment of sea turtles. Then, it focused on the need to protect sea turtles and listed different factors which threaten them. Next, the Czech zoos and organisations involved in sea turtle conservation were discussed. Czech zoos which collaborate with non-profit organisations or directly cooperate with zoos and conservation centres in Indonesia were mentioned as well as their conservation efforts. Also, different Czech organisations were listed which showed that the Czech Republic is actively involved in sea turtle conservation efforts in Indonesia. The in-depth interviews provided deeper insight into the work of sea turtle activists from the Czech Republic thus the information provided was used to bring a more detailed description of their daily work. Supported by quotes from the interviews we can see the daily work divided into two categories with both of them having their challenges and difficulties. The interviews provided information about tackling problems in sea turtle conservation and their resolution.

The practical part was conducted as in-depth interviews which aimed to show the initial interest of landlocked conservationists for their work in Indonesia. Based on the interviews it can be concluded that the initial motivation for working with sea turtles varies and thus cannot be generalised. Interviewees had different incentives which have led them to become part of sea turtle conservation. Either their interest stemmed from their field of study or work, or it was influenced by seeing other conservation efforts. Nevertheless, the interviews provided valuable insights into the world of sea turtle conservation, which according to the participants, heavily relies on cooperation with local communities.

More research could be done on the topic of the initial interest in sea turtles of people from landlocked countries. However, to show more clear results, quantitative research including a bigger number of respondents should be done.

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Appendix 1: Interview with Mgr. Eva Bílková

1 What has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation?

2 I study biology, so turtles have always appealed to me because I love the sea and I go
3 to the sea a lot. Even though we are land creatures, I am fond of the sea. However, my greatest
4 interest was sparked by following the stories of people who protect turtles on social media and
5 television, as there are many of them. I saw Hanka Svobodová three or four years ago when she
6 gave a lecture at our university, and I thought what she did was great. Another part of this
7 interest was when they opened volunteer programs at our university, and one of the programs
8 was specifically related to sea turtle conservation. I read through the options, and there was
9 Georgia with horses, and I thought, 'I'm not interested in horses,' and then there were turtles, so
10 I chose that. Overall, we have few opportunities for such experiences, so I am completely
11 shocked that they are doing this here, and I am excited about it. They don't pay much, but the
12 worst part is covering the cost of the flight, and then one figures something out. I am incredibly
13 grateful that they gave us this opportunity.

14 Please tell me how your journey in sea turtle conservation in Indonesia started.

15 I've already mentioned it; it's that university mobility program. It didn't occur to me to
16 apply, but then my colleague, Anička, a marine biologist, approached me. She said she wanted
17 to participate in that volunteering opportunity but didn't want to go alone. So, we both applied.
18 She came to me, mentioning that there's such an opportunity, and she wants to apply. She feared
19 going alone and asked if I would join her since she knew I travel so I said okay.

20 Which personal connections or experiences have prompted you to focus on sea turtle 21 conservation in Indonesia?

22 Firstly, there's Hanka Svobodová, whom I saw, and she convinced me first. Then there
23 was my colleague Anička, the marine biologist, and finally, there was also the connection with
24 the university that made this possible for me, so that's it.

25 What values are particularly important to you that have influenced your work in 26 Indonesia?

27 This is a very tricky question. I believe that the greatest value for me is justice because
28 I believe in some form of climate justice, and I think that as inland dwellers, we need to start
29 caring about what is happening elsewhere. So, justice is important to me, and it has also

30 influenced me in the sense that we, as the educated and wealthy, have a responsibility to share
31 part of that wealth and, at the same time, the knowledge. So, this is the most significant value
32 for me, and then I'm not sure if it's exactly a value, but certainly, active citizenship belongs
33 there. Firstly, voluntarism and volunteering are one thing, and the other is balancing those scales.
34 It also includes cultural sensitivity and awareness that people live differently, and must be
35 approached differently.

36 **How did the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic's support for the sea turtle**
37 **conservation project in Indonesia influence your decision to get involved?**

38 No Ministry of the Environment is involved in my work, so we don't have support, or
39 at least, I'm not aware of it.

40 **What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like?**

41 In the field, there is some teaching happening, like in the morning, where I either prepare
42 for the classes or teach simple things within the local community. Mostly, the teaching takes
43 place in the afternoon, either at the school or in some recreational space. It involves children,
44 adults, basically everyone. That's the way of helping in the field. I have conducted field trips to
45 sea turtle centres, mapping the chosen centres, travelling there, and examining the environment
46 in which turtles are kept and how they relocate the eggs. Afterwards, I compiled a report for
47 each centre with recommendations and identified areas that needed improvement. Completely
48 in the field, we took care of turtles, which meant going on two-night shifts—one at eleven at
49 night, and the other around three or four in the morning where you do patrol which involves
50 walking along the shore and searching for nesting turtles or nests. If found, the eggs are
51 collected, and transported to a hatchery, where a hole of the same depth is dug again, and the
52 eggs are relocated. If the turtles hatch, they are released either early in the morning or in the
53 evening, interspersed with various activities like planting trees, cleaning the beach, or any
54 educational activities.

55 Outside the field, meaning here in the Czech Republic, there are occasional lectures; for
56 example, we had one on Thursday, and I had one last week. I respond daily to emails from
57 volunteers because I am responsible for all Indonesian volunteers for sea turtle conservation. I
58 communicate with them, have various online calls with potential candidates, and have created
59 several manuals on obtaining visas, buying tickets, what it's like there, what the Indonesians are
60 like, what they are not like, and so on. I also organize some fundraising events, and meetings
61 with volunteers – that's ongoing. I also frequently communicate with locals because I have close

62 acquaintances in many Indonesian communities, so when something needs to be arranged, we
63 call each other and solve everything. Also, besides that, I am learning Indonesian through
64 Duolingo because it knowing the language makes everything easier.

65 **Which challenges are you facing in your daily work? How do you overcome them?**

66 Like all conservationists, we face challenges such as limited finances and time. This
67 means that all activities I undertake are voluntary, without any claim for any reward, which is
68 challenging because it also means minimal private life, which cannot be reconciled with it.
69 Regarding finances, it means that something else has to support me. I do this as a leisure activity,
70 and I overcome it by being fortunate to have a great job. I work at the university, so they support
71 me there. It also requires patience and tolerance because another significant challenge is dealing
72 with a different culture, and Indonesians are incredible – anyone who has been there knows that.
73 So, for me, a huge challenge is trying to meet deadlines and schedules, and constantly
74 explaining things to them in a positive way, finding ways to explain why it's important.
75 Communication is also a big challenge for me, requiring tolerance, patience, and problem-
76 solving, and beyond that, I probably don't have much more to add.

77 **When you reflect on your work in Indonesia: To what extent have your motivations and**
78 **expectations been fulfilled? What obstacles have there been?**

79 I had, thank goodness, minimal expectations because I travel a lot, so I was prepared for
80 anything. Nevertheless, even those minimal expectations were not met, and everything turned
81 out completely different. Certainly, what exceeded my expectations was nature; it was fantastic.
82 However, regarding the conservation aspect itself, it unfolded completely differently than I had
83 imagined. The challenges include, of course, the cultural differences, the diversity of cultures,
84 the inability to plan, and I don't know if it's the case in all parts of Indonesia, but in the southeast,
85 we faced the issue that they don't say unpleasant news and tend to avoid saying 'no,' so
86 extracting real facts about how things are going is quite challenging. So, the obstacle is the
87 cultural difference, and language is a huge one. Within the culture, it's also that they are not
88 very capable of organizing anything, and there are constant public holidays, which I didn't fully
89 understand. Due to the significant mix of religions, when Muslim holidays end, Christian
90 holidays begin, and then they also have traditional local holidays. So, a meeting with the mayor,
91 which would be arranged within half a week in our country, takes two months there.

92 As for conservation, it was extremely challenging to implement it where I was due to
93 poverty, firstly, and secondly, education. The other two significant problems were that poverty

94 is an immovable obstacle, and if they don't have money, it will never change. And then there
95 was also education. We imagined that we would teach environmental topics, but the children
96 have no basic knowledge about anything. So, we arrived with the idea of teaching about turtles,
97 and they had no clue whether a turtle breathes in water or not, that there are more than one
98 species of fish in the water – the children thought fish are either big or small, not realizing there
99 are different species. So, this was entirely beyond our expectations and was a significant
100 obstacle.

101 **How do you view your work with communities?**

102 It's crucial but at the same time the most challenging work. We work a lot with local
103 communities because, without them, it has no meaning. I worked in a place where, as one of
104 the few places in the world, hunting large marine mammals, such as orcas, manta rays, and
105 dolphins, is allowed. They kill them with bamboo sticks, so explaining to them that we don't
106 eat sea turtles because they have a role in the ecosystem is hardcore. So, I would like to mention
107 that working with local communities is difficult, very difficult, but it has the greatest
108 significance. We try to educate where it makes sense. We went to a fishing village that no longer
109 catches fish because they dynamited the reef, and we tried to explain to them that by rebuilding
110 the reef, the fish will return, but they have to fish sustainably and in small quantities, which
111 they don't understand. They don't understand why whales and coral are connected; there,
112 education makes complete sense. Where education doesn't make sense is in those fishing
113 villages where they eat whales. I visited one, and nothing can be grown or done there, so their
114 only livelihood is whale oil and turtle eggs and shells. On the other hand, I believe that tourism
115 can change this. Another thing is the financial support for these communities. I think education
116 and financial support can solve it. By financial support, I don't mean sending them money
117 packages monthly; it's about offering them alternative work.

118 **How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both**
119 **in terms of environmental impact and financial support?**

120 I've already mentioned it; it's environmental education plus, of course, interventions in
121 the landscape for some long-term impact – this is related to education. I believe that
122 sustainability will be ensured through the support of local residents and the development of
123 local communities. Tourism – I believe that if we bring either volunteers or tourists there,
124 instead of hunting whales, if they do tours or whale watching, they will earn more money, and
125 everyone will be happy. I also believe that by financially supporting rangers, those who protect

126 the turtles, which the whole island envies them for, being paid for it, will make a significant
127 impact. At the same time, it involves supporting artisan communities. We sponsor women
128 workshops, men workshops, and we support traditional crafts so that local residents don't resort
129 to industrial fishing. Sustainability in the Czech Republic involves education, lectures, and
130 acquiring funds mainly from small entities through various charity events, and specifically
131 through these lectures. I can't imagine it differently for now.

132 **What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get**
133 **involved in sea turtle protection in Indonesia?**

134 I believe that the most important thing is to be well-prepared factually, to know what to
135 expect, so that one is not surprised by the living conditions there, and so on. Another thing is to
136 mentally prepare oneself for the fact that it's a different world, it operates differently, and
137 Indonesians have completely different priorities, a completely different culture, and a different
138 work ethic. Arm yourself with patience, practice it, and always have a plan B., be so well-
139 prepared that you can say, 'Well, this ferry hasn't been running for six months; I need to know
140 something about a plan B.' And not to have high expectations, or rather, not to have expectations
141 at all.

142 **I would like to know how many volunteers you have now. Is there a lot of interest in it?**

143 I, myself, am shocked about it. I thought we were going as pioneers or something, but I
144 found out it's not really the case. Not every volunteer is the same. In my opinion, someone who
145 goes for a week or two is not really a volunteer but more like a tourist, because in two weeks,
146 you can go explore Jakarta, I believe. But in those communities that don't speak the language
147 and basically live a traditional way of life, you won't even learn to use the toilet properly in two
148 weeks. As for longer-term volunteers, I feel there are more and more of them. For next summer,
149 I already have a full team in Indonesia – they have beautiful stories, and it's mainly girls who
150 sign up. Volunteering, in general, is something that girls are more interested in. There are girls
151 who have graduated from some school, maybe high school, and didn't immediately find a job.
152 They work for six months in a factory in Austria to earn money for their stay in Indonesia and
153 want to be there for three or four months. I really appreciate these people a lot, and more and
154 more of them are reaching out to me. In the summer, we have two ladies coming, who are
155 between forty and fifty years old, travelling with their daughters. Both are teachers, independent
156 of each other. One is around forty, and her daughter is about fourteen, and they are travelling
157 together. That's a high-quality volunteer because since she's a teacher, she will know what to

158 do. The other one is older, around fifty, so there are such volunteers as well. Also, a lot of
159 university students are going. Now, groups of three or four are going, and it's getting better and
160 better. I think even Hanka has a lot of volunteers in Sri Lanka, so that's good.

Appendix 2: Interview with Mgr. Hana Vašina Svobodová

1 What has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation?

2 My parents say that when I was only two years old, I used to bring snails home and that
3 animals with little houses were what interested me. At the age of six, I begged for a land turtle
4 in exchange for good grades, and I still have it to this day. So, I think that's it. Later, I read
5 about them and found out that some species are endangered, and something threatens them, so
6 I wanted to help them. For example, in the ninth grade of elementary school, I wrote to the then-
7 director of Prague Zoo, Petr Fejk, that I wanted to protect turtles and asked what I should do.
8 He was great; he replied and said that I should probably study in the Faculty of Science. I
9 actually didn't quite understand why I should go to a grammar school first, but I went, and then,
10 as part of the grammar school, I discovered that there are volunteer programs. I found a program
11 in Mexico to protect sea turtles, so in the third year, when I was eighteen, I went there in the
12 summer and that was my first encounter with sea turtles.

13 I am quite an idealist, and I thought that the protection of sea turtles was either
14 happening somewhere or not at all. In Mexico, it surprised me that there was an effort to protect
15 sea turtles, but it wasn't going very well. Although we were supposed to be on the beach directly
16 with the turtles and cleaning up litter, in the end, we had to talk to tourists in a tourist centre.
17 We built a wall and cleaned aquariums for turtles. Those were tasks that didn't seem necessary
18 for real turtle conservation. After fourteen days we finally convinced them that we wanted to
19 be on the beach so they took us there. Mexican biologists were sitting there, playing cards in a
20 cobweb-filled cottage, not showing much interest in turtles. They took us to the beach, rode
21 around on quads, and said that twenty-five turtles laid eggs that day and that they moved the
22 eggs to safety for fifteen of them, but they didn't. That made me very angry, and I told myself
23 that I would do it better. At the same time, I saw that sea turtle conservation was needed because
24 just fourteen days after I left, there was an article in the media that about thirty turtles were
25 stolen on that beach— I don't remember the exact number, but some adult females were stolen
26 for meat. Those biologists were probably in that cottage playing cards and not watching the
27 beach, and that made me completely angry, thinking, "This is not how it should be." Since then,
28 I started giving lectures about the threats which sea turtles are facing.

29 Then I got into the Faculty of Science and I went to some professors to try to convince
30 them to do my bachelor's thesis on sea turtles. But it wasn't the same situation as it is today; it
31 was seventeen years ago. They were like, "How did you come up with that? We don't even have

32 a sea!" They made fun of me and asked if I had seen the movie "Finding Nemo" yesterday. I
33 then told them about Mexico, and they realized that it probably wasn't just a spur-of-the-
34 moment decision. Since the bachelor's thesis in our country could be more of a research project,
35 it wasn't necessary to investigate anything extensively. So, I defended the thesis and on the
36 same day, I went to Ireland for two and a half months because I arranged my master's thesis
37 with an Irish supervisor. In Ireland, you can also observe turtles, but that is due to climate
38 change. Leatherbacks need a surface temperature of at least fifteen degrees Celsius. Before,
39 they were seen mostly in France, but since my master's thesis – which is fifteen years ago now,
40 ten years before that, the limit of that temperature shifted three hundred and thirty kilometres
41 north. So suddenly, they weren't just in France; they were already seen in the south of Ireland.
42 Today, they might even be in the middle of Ireland which is strange. They don't lay eggs there;
43 they just feed there. I sat there for two and a half months on a rock, counting and observing
44 whales, dolphins, and turtles through a telescope, just in case it was a cold summer, and no
45 turtles came close to the shore to justify the study. I have a thesis in English from that experience,
46 guided by an Irish person with a Czech person here from our place. That was like a confirmation
47 that I wanted to be more involved with sea turtles.

48 I found out about a project called Darmasiswa, which is a project that all Indonesian
49 embassies offer for people under thirty-five to study something in Indonesia. There are people
50 here in the Czech Republic who have gone to study Indonesian dance, musical instruments, or
51 something similar through this program. I went to study the Indonesian language. So, in the
52 fifth year of university, I went there, and for a year, I was at a university in Indonesia, in 2010,
53 which was the first time I visited. It was because I discovered that sea turtles were in the worst
54 condition in the Indian Ocean, and four out of the seven species lay their eggs in Indonesia. I
55 wanted to help there, but it was clear that one needed to be able to speak the local language. So,
56 I studied Indonesian. I wrote my final thesis about turtles in Indonesian, and then I volunteered
57 at various centres there. Another significant impulse that transformed things was that the people
58 who sponsored the project and the rangers who were supporting it left suddenly at the place
59 where I volunteered for about two years in a row. The rangers asked if I could help them get
60 salaries, and in my naivety, and because I enjoyed it and found it crucial, I said yes. This
61 commitment meant that I had to suddenly raise one hundred and twenty thousand Czech crowns
62 per month, and I had no idea how to do it. So, that was a significant initial impulse for the
63 creation of the organization. I used to give lectures about turtles before, but it was not endorsed
64 by any organization or transparent account, so this was a significant turning point. Today, we

65 protect not only that one place but two more in Indonesia and one in Sri Lanka, so the program
66 has expanded further.

67 **Could it be said that your path to conservation, especially in Indonesia, was influenced by**
68 **Darmasiswa – I mean by your experience and observations there?**

69 Well, it was more the other way around. I simply wanted to protect turtles, and I knew
70 that I needed to speak the language to do that, so I went for Darmasiswa. Darmasiswa helped
71 me because I still communicate with conservationists in Indonesian, check Indonesian
72 accounting, and so on. For example, Petra is capable of going to a booth at the “Obzory” festival
73 tomorrow, explaining something about turtles, and selling items to support the project. In this
74 aspect, someone else could represent me, but there aren't people here who can review
75 Indonesian accounting.

76 **What values are particularly important to you that have influenced your work in**
77 **Indonesia?**

78 For me, this is always an important question. The most crucial value for me is respect.
79 I believe it greatly influences how I work with local people. One might say that many things
80 are outdated, that white people behaved condescendingly towards others 150 years ago, but
81 unfortunately, it still happens. Not only does it come from travellers but it also happens within
82 conservation organizations. There are examples of Czech people who treat locals differently.
83 In the place where the donors left, as I mentioned, I met up with them a few times before they
84 left in 2017. There was a lady from Germany, and we were sailing with her to the island where
85 we were protecting turtles. Three guys, the conservationists, were already sitting on the shore,
86 waiting to help us carry out food supplies and backpacks. She casually said that they were sitting
87 there like three monkeys. I find such things extremely offensive.

88 In the beginning, I thought I would protect turtles, sit on a beach somewhere, transfer
89 the eggs, and it would be great. It may not look like that now, but I'm an introvert, and I like
90 being in the forest and nature. Over time, I've learned that nature conservation is mainly about
91 people and communicating with them. Explaining and showing them everything and
92 convincing them by understanding their perspective, not just saying, "You must do it like this
93 and like that, and you're doing it wrong." For example, when I was in Indonesia as a volunteer
94 on a turtle protection project in Java, they had a protected part of the beach, a fenced area, and
95 monkeys would jump in and always manage to find some eggs. They could detect it by smell,
96 knowing the eggs were about to hatch in two or three days, and they would just devour the turtle

97 with the eggs. The local conservationists dealt with it by shooting slingshots at them three times
98 a day. Everyone might think, "What a silly idea! If they put a net up there, the monkeys wouldn't
99 climb in, problem solved." But the moment we tell them outright, "You're completely crazy;
100 you can't do it like this. You have to do it like this and this," they will just get angry and won't
101 do anything, constantly making excuses for why it can't be done. I believe it's not just about
102 communication with Indonesians; it would be the same here. I handled it back then by noting
103 that they love drinking coffee. For Indonesians, coffee means two teaspoons of coffee, two
104 teaspoons of sugar, and flies buzzing around it. I said, "Look, it reminds me of when that
105 monkey climbs into the protected part of the beach, just like when a fly gets into your cup."
106 They said, "Well, you're right, Hana," and I asked, "How do you prevent flies from getting into
107 your coffee?" They replied, "We put a plate on it." I suggested, "Could we do something similar
108 with the protected part of the beach?" First, they thought of a roof, and then we suggested using
109 a net so the rain could get inside. The next day, they enthusiastically went to get the net, and it
110 was done immediately. But I believe if I scolded them, it wouldn't have worked out that way.

111 Sometimes volunteers come, thinking that in two weeks, they will save the world. So,
112 they force the local conservationists to pick up trash with them at noon in thirty-five degrees.
113 But the local conservationists have been there every day for several years, and they simply don't
114 want to pick up trash in the scorching heat. When I started, I went with a bag to pick up trash
115 for maybe three weeks by myself, and after fourteen days, they asked, "Hana, why are you
116 doing this, anyway?" It wasn't just about the trash; I felt sorry for them. I said, "Well, I just
117 think that if we pick it up, there will be less trash every day. Then we'll just collect the new
118 ones, and it won't be the debris that's been here for a hundred years." They thought about it for
119 about three days, and then one day, they joined me with bags, and they've been doing it
120 regularly since then. But if I had forced them into it, they wouldn't have done it. So, for me,
121 respect is extremely important in this regard. Of course, the primary value is nature; it has to be
122 something that genuinely helps, and I can respect the local people as I want. But if, in Sri Lanka,
123 they build those pools for turtles, I don't care; I won't respect that. It must first be good for the
124 turtles, that's nature - or the turtles are the first value. Then, education is crucial for me because
125 I think if we stopped having money for conservationists, for their salaries, poachers would
126 return. But poachers are always local people, so if we educate them in the meantime, make them
127 aware of why turtles are important and that it will help them if tourists come there because of
128 them, it will be okay. It often happens to me when I'm teaching there—I'm not there much now,
129 but in schools with little children, it's easy. I take some plush toys and some games; I make
130 memory games and colouring books with tasks and everything possible, and they get

131 immediately excited. For older ones, I show them videos, and photos, and discuss them with
132 them. When someone asked me for the first time, "All right, we understand that turtles are
133 important in the sea, they are endangered, but what should I do when my dad brings home turtle
134 eggs for dinner?" I was a bit stunned because what can you answer? No child will send their
135 dad to prison for five years. At that moment, I turned the question back to them, "What would
136 you do?" they argued for about fifteen minutes and then said they would tell their parents that
137 they wouldn't eat it, that they didn't want it. And I found this to be the best answer because
138 when you tell your parents five times that you won't eat something, they won't bring it the sixth
139 time. I think that's the best they could come up with. So, education, in my opinion, has great
140 value, and a significant purpose.

141 Then there's another initiative, being proactive and trying to inspire others with your
142 work. I like it, and it's becoming relatively common for someone to come up to me after a
143 lecture, saying they are currently studying biology and that when they were in high school or
144 primary school, I gave a lecture there. They mention that they always loved nature but thought
145 it was too complicated and impossible. However, my talk motivated them and showed them
146 that it could be done. This happened to me about fourteen days ago – I received an email from
147 a girl who attended one of my high school lectures. She expressed how the lecture energized
148 her and how she despises the fact that everyone just closes their eyes to these issues. It's a great
149 reward when you hear that what you do has inspired someone. Being proactive is crucial, and I
150 tell volunteers that when they go there, Indonesians or Sri Lankans are not people who will
151 chase white people to work. With each volunteer, we discuss what would be good to do there,
152 but in the end, it's up to them. How proactive they will be and what they will come up with.
153 Some people do almost nothing, sunbathe, and read a lot which is also fine. But then there are
154 people who teach children every day, walk with the rangers, travel around the island, and talk
155 to other people about what they are doing there. Once, they spray-painted the logo of the local
156 conservation organization next to the road. They did it together with the locals after explaining
157 it to them because Indonesians always stop and ask what you're doing around them. If you're in
158 an area where no white person has ever been, they're curious. So, it really depends a lot on the
159 initiative of these people, and it's crucial because, without it, you won't accomplish anything.

160 One of my friends has an Indian husband, and he always says he would like to do
161 something similar to what I do. However, my friend Bara always responds, "Well, but then you
162 couldn't go to the cinema in the evening and do this and that because Hanka, every day, the first
163 thing she does is handle everything related to the project. So only after that, you have free time."
164 And these people just don't see it. Of course, it's not like I go to Indonesia once a year and then

165 do nothing here; I have forty emails every day, a two-year-old child, and I give twenty lectures
166 a month, so a lot is going on. But if a person doesn't have it within them, it won't work because,
167 without any reward, they won't want to do it. Then there's a sense of honesty or doing things as
168 best as I can. And also, some patience because the results are not visible immediately. Several
169 times, officials in Indonesia told me, "You're not doing anything there because you still don't
170 have more female sea turtles coming to lay eggs," and it's really hard to explain to them that we
171 release four-centimetre turtles, and they will return in thirty years when they are adults. It's not
172 like they will come next year. The work is time-consuming, and you can't say that in fourteen
173 days, a species will be saved, and you'll see some extraordinary results.

174 Two more things come to mind, one is responsibility and cooperation. Cooperation with
175 locals seems crucial, more in the style of finding a local person interested in sea turtle
176 conservation, supporting them, and then they find another four who are somewhat interested,
177 and they find others. So, it's not dependent on when I am there, but it requires collaboration
178 with locals and also, in some way, with the government and people here. I used to feel that I
179 would do everything fastest and best if I did it all alone. Now I know it's such a big project that
180 with a small child, I can't do everything alone, so I need someone to be there today and
181 tomorrow at that festival. I can't stand there for 8 hours with her and offer things for sale.
182 Collaboration, and the fact that these people want to help me with it for free or as if they were
183 helping the turtles because I also do it for free, seems great to me.

184 **How did the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic's support for the sea turtle**
185 **conservation project in Indonesia influence your decision to get involved?**

186 The Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic gave us some money for
187 creating puzzles seven years ago. Last year, we received a grant from the Liberec Region, but
188 the Ministry of the Environment doesn't play any role. We collaborate with the Indonesian
189 Ministry of the Environment and the Sri Lankan Ministry of the Environment in some way.

190 **What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like?**

191 In the field, it's the Indonesian or Sri Lankan person. It also depends on the location –
192 for example, we currently have a program in southern Borneo in an uninhabited island where
193 the conservationists live. So, they are essentially working there 24 hours a day, taking shifts.
194 At six in the morning, for instance, two of them go on a patrol, checking the turtles that laid
195 eggs since the night patrol. The eggs that are in a risky location, where the tide could flood them
196 or are far from the conservationist's house, where poachers could approach unnoticed, are

197 moved to safety. Then, as it gets warmer, they cook breakfast, take a break since they didn't
198 sleep much at night, and have more work starting at four in the afternoon when it's a bit cooler.
199 They patrol the island again, checking where the hatchlings emerged and digging up the nests.
200 Each nest may contain two or three small turtles that couldn't get out on their own, perhaps the
201 last ones or those stuck on a small root or something similar. They retrieve them and release
202 them into the sea, counting the broken shells. We claim, and it's true, that we have released over
203 4.5 million turtles into the sea, calculated from the number of cracked shells in the nests, as the
204 turtles that went on their own were also counted, and we helped those that couldn't make it by
205 themselves. Then, some turtles could be infertile or could have undeveloped embryos, and all
206 of this is recorded. Around four or five in the afternoon, some of them clean up the garbage
207 around the beach because the temperature is more suitable for work, and then they have dinner.
208 For the evening patrol, they go around ten at night, and then another one at two in the morning,
209 again patrolling the island, observing the tracks of turtles where they laid eggs. It's about
210 relocating the eggs immediately if the turtle lays them in a risky spot, and they record the
211 number of turtles. Some turtles come but don't lay eggs because they start digging and encounter
212 rocks, garbage, or roots, and so they leave. So, they have the number of turtles that arrived, the
213 number that laid eggs or didn't, and where, as the beach is divided into sectors every fifty meters.
214 This is the most challenging work because it involves rangers who are on-site all the time and
215 have many turtles to monitor. We had, for example, thirty turtles laying eggs in one night during
216 the summer in Borneo. In a year, it could be, for instance, twelve thousand – it was completely
217 unbelievable.

218 Then there are the rangers on Lembata, where there are fewer turtles, so they (rangers)
219 have their own jobs. One might be the director of a clinic, another a fisherman, another works
220 in the village mayor's office, and so on. In the evening, they go to check the beach in front of
221 the village. So, we don't send them a full salary, but rather a contribution or acknowledgement
222 for the work they do. We help them more by sending volunteers, teaching local children,
223 teaching them to swim, having a protected part of the beach, financing construction, and other
224 things. These rangers have only that part of the beach, so at night, they go to the beach, and
225 when they find a nest, they move it to the protected area. When the eggs hatch, they release the
226 turtles into the sea. Because they are on an inhabited island, they post about it online, and local
227 people, scouts, and others join the release – always about fifty people participate in the event.
228 It's always a big educational event. So, it's completely different because no one comes to those
229 uninhabited islands at all; it's just too far. But there, they can use it for education and outreach,
230 and they don't have to keep the turtles somewhere. It's similar in Sri Lanka, where our ranger

231 has his job – he's a carpenter and then at night, he checks the beach, moves eggs to safety, and,
232 on top of it all, when it's tourist season, he has about four turtles that don't swim anywhere. In
233 my opinion, these turtles were released from the pools and have lost the instinct of where to
234 swim and where to return to lay eggs, so he warns tourists not to touch them. People are different;
235 some are happy to swim with a turtle, and some would like to pull it onto the beach and take
236 pictures with it. So, we try to ensure that it's written everywhere not to touch them and, at the
237 same time, monitored. It's good there that the turtles can swim out of the bay, but they probably
238 can't find food on their own. So, he tears seaweed for them and brings it to them, and as a result,
239 they get used to it and feel good there, but people still can't pick them up.

240 And then there's the work of a conservationist. We, as conservationists from the Czech
241 Republic, go there only once in a while. It used to be, for example, twice a year, but now, with
242 the little one, I couldn't go since the beginning of COVID; I was there last in 2019. Last year, I
243 was in Sri Lanka for the first time, so I haven't been there at all for three years. This year, in
244 February, we'll go to Indonesia and Sri Lanka, but when I come there, it's a reward because I
245 finally see those turtles again. Now, we will stop at four places, three of which are project sites,
246 plus one new opportunity in Sulawesi, so I want to go there and meet the conservationists. So,
247 it will be quite a rush, twelve days of domestic flights around Indonesia, and with a child. So,
248 the stay there is usually a reward for me because here it's something completely invisible. But
249 one has to raise money, do lectures everywhere, in schools and for the public. Negotiate
250 collaborations like “Zelená domácnost” – it's a store with eco-friendly products, and they give
251 us two percent of the purchase when someone chooses to help the non-profit. “Chráněná dílna”
252 sews plush turtles, and when they sell them, they donate some amount to us. So, these things
253 need to be negotiated to secure salaries for the conservationists and then handle their accounting.
254 It's a lot about emails and communication, so that's the routine work here. Then there are people
255 who help regularly, which is great. For example, one friend, when I write something new, puts
256 it on the website so that I don't have to deal with the technical side of things. Or there is a girl
257 who manages Instagram, and some people help at stands, so we try to delegate some tasks. But
258 these are more like volunteers; you can't say that they are all sea turtle conservationists. They
259 do it maybe alongside school; it's not their main activity. But actually, no one in the Czech
260 Republic has it as their main activity, not even me. We all do it voluntarily. I am a methodologist;
261 I have a mentor for teachers of natural science subjects. I work at the TEREZA education centre
262 when I'm not on maternity leave.

263 **Which challenges are you facing in your daily work? How do you overcome them?**

264 In Indonesia, I'm always surprised that something keeps surprising me. I've been going
265 there for fourteen years, and I think I know their mentality, but, for example, now, on the island
266 of Lembata in southeast Indonesia, we face a situation where three years ago, the mayor gave
267 us land. The land is state-owned, and he donated it to us; we have a contract for it.
268 Conservationists can create a protected part of the beach on that land, they also built a place for
269 education, benches and so on. Before, there were no volunteers there because of COVID-19,
270 but suddenly, there were several white people in the summer. Perhaps the local people felt that
271 they were involved in some money. So, a guy from another village came and claimed the land,
272 saying it was his. Since there is no cadastral office in Indonesia, this has been going on since
273 August. The mayor, avoiding any conflict, refuses to meet and resolve it, and it is already
274 November. In the protected part of the beach, there were eggs, and everyone was afraid to go
275 there when it suddenly got enclosed with tape. So, the rangers broke in there at night to release
276 freshly hatched turtles. However, wild dogs started crawling in through that hole, and they ate
277 the other eggs that hadn't hatched yet. And this really bothers me, that we have a contract for
278 that land; the mayor gave it to us, and that person—does he have any contract or not? Did
279 anyone ask him about it? Here, I click on the cadastral online, and in five minutes, I will know
280 whose land it is and how it will be resolved.

281 Or, in southern Borneo, we are dealing with... that will be easy to resolve, but I have to
282 go to Indonesia because of that and sit with them at the computer and play with them with Excel.
283 I want some data from them, and they send me something slightly different every month. So,
284 they don't understand the Excel table, even though it's written in Indonesian there is a barrier. I
285 wanted the number of clutches hatched that day, so there was data and a column with the
286 number of clutches, and they wrote 1, 2, 3, 4–31, and I said, "No, you numbered the days, that's
287 not the number of clutches, it surely doesn't go like this." And they said, "Aha, aha, so we will
288 write eggs there," and I said, "No, you have that in a different column." And they said, "So the
289 number of clutches per day." Then they started writing clutches, but they wrote it as three
290 clutches. I told them they couldn't write the word clutches there because then it wouldn't add
291 up in the end. Even though I've explained it fifty times, I still feel it will be much easier to go
292 there and show them, and sit together, and it will go better, and it will be resolved immediately.
293 So, these are the current challenges.

294 Once it happened to me that we went to the mayor's office, and there were sea turtle
295 eggs prepared for us on the table, as if to show us who's in charge or something. So, I didn't
296 know what to do. If I had called the police on the mayor, nothing would have happened anyway.
297 And he was precisely watching what we would do. Or when guys caught a poacher - now we

298 know that we will go to jail with the poacher, and those guys will sit there with him for three
299 days until someone from the provincial prison comes. Because these are all small islands, it's
300 likely that the poacher is the cousin of that police officer or his schoolmate. So, it happened to
301 us several times that the policeman went to lunch and left the prison or their booth unlocked,
302 and the poacher escaped, and nothing was resolved. Now the rangers actually guard the poacher
303 until someone from the provincial prison arrives. Even when you tell someone here about it,
304 they all look at you like, what, that's not possible.

305 A lifelong challenge in Indonesia is the trash. No one here understands that 250 million
306 people are living there, and none of those people is a garbage collector. But that's just how it is
307 there, and we have to somehow face it and teach people how to deal with that waste. They have
308 the "just today" mentality. For example, when they want to wash their hair, they buy single-use
309 shampoo in those small plastic pouches because it's cheaper than the whole bottle. But they
310 don't realize that the bottle is cheaper than the single-use pouches, which only create waste.
311 They simply lack critical thinking and financial reasoning. I have a friend who is a kindergarten
312 teacher and treats children well, and one day an enormous flat-screen TV arrived there, and I
313 said, "What will you have a TV at home for when you don't even have a toilet at home?" Yeah,
314 but you can't get a toilet on instalment payments. So, one constantly faces this different way of
315 thinking and the fact that they haven't gone through that development. It's evident how
316 important money is to them; they would buy things that I don't consider important at all. For
317 example, when one ranger was here for two months, he needed to buy a jacket so that he
318 wouldn't be cold. I would buy him one from a thrift store, but he needed a branded one to show
319 people that he was in Europe. So, he takes it there (to Indonesia) and hangs it on a hanger, and
320 that doesn't seem important to me. When the head of the rangers became the project's co-leader,
321 the first thing he wanted to do was buy a new phone and shoes so that he could go to those
322 meetings and look good. It's not a value for me at all, so it was interesting to me how they think
323 differently.

324 These are the challenges one constantly faces there, but now the biggest challenge for
325 me is to resolve Lembata. And there is also a lack of understanding of why we, people from a
326 landlocked country, should contribute to sea turtle conservation. But often, people understand
327 it when we tell them, "Do you go to the sea? Do you want to see a sea turtle?" One explains the
328 roles in the ocean, and then they somewhat understand that these turtles have been here for
329 eleven million years, so they could stay a bit longer. But often, people act like, why aren't you
330 saving something in the Czech Republic? Why turtles? This misunderstanding is quite common.

331 **When you reflect on your work in Indonesia: To what extent have your motivations and**
332 **expectations been fulfilled? What obstacles have there been?**

333 A lot. I didn't plan it at all; I thought I would be employed somewhere in an organization
334 that protects sea turtles, and that I would be in the field. I never thought I would start my own
335 organization and be the person who manages, coordinates and raises funds for it. It wouldn't
336 have occurred to me at all; I would have never dreamed that we would save four and a half
337 million turtles and that this number increases every day. Whenever I'm tired, I watch a video of
338 turtles hatching and running into the sea; that helps me a lot. It always motivates me that every
339 day this is what is really happening there, and it's just because I'm not there that it doesn't bring
340 me as much joy as if I were on the spot. It's important for me to always realize that this happened
341 again today just because we are there. It has never been the case that I would say I don't care
342 about it anymore, but there are moments when a one says, "I'm tired; I need someone to help
343 me with something." Because I do everything when the little one is sleeping, so it's incredibly
344 demanding in that regard. My husband and I would like some time for ourselves. Or we're
345 dealing with the reconstruction of our house, but we have to finish the turtle calendar because
346 there are thirty thousand of them, so something is always happening. Sometimes it's joy, and
347 sometimes it's just that we have to finish it because it's necessary, but that's probably in every
348 job. But I'm glad it works, and, on the contrary, I was very afraid during COVID that without
349 lectures, people wouldn't contribute, and it would just end, and we wouldn't have salaries for
350 the rangers. But many people decided to send a hundred each month, and that saved the program.
351 Now people send money, and at the same time, there are events, so somehow there is money,
352 and therefore we can expand the project further. As I mentioned, we are considering expanding
353 it to Sulawesi. It makes me very happy that we can help like this.

354 **We already discussed this a little bit before, but you work a lot with local communities, so**
355 **I'd like to know how you approach this work and how you view it.**

356 I consider it extremely important work because they are the ones either stealing the eggs
357 or killing the turtles for their shells, so when you change their mindset, the turtles are no longer
358 threatened. However, changing their mindset is the most challenging part, and it takes the
359 longest, so it's not as simple as telling them once, and suddenly, they change their thinking and
360 behaviour; it doesn't work that way. But, at the same time that is why education and working
361 with children is essential. Working with children causes changes in adults as well. In schools,
362 we address waste and instead of physical education on Fridays, we go to the beach to collect
363 trash. When parents see their children picking up garbage, they feel a bit awkward about leaving

364 their own litter on the beach and think more about it. For example, I taught in a kindergarten,
365 and all the children had bracelets made of turtle shells. We couldn't tell the children that it was
366 not okay because their parents bought it for them, so I explained to the teachers how it was
367 removed from the turtles, how terrible and illegal it was, and how drastic it was. The teachers
368 resolved the issue in a way in which they told the parents that since it's illegal, the children
369 won't be allowed to wear the bracelets to school. When I visited a few months later, no one had
370 them anymore. Or, for instance, working with coconuts – we conducted workshops teaching
371 craftsmen, who used to make things from turtle shells, to create items from coconuts that we
372 sell at lectures. Coconuts grow everywhere there, and they eat the inside and discard or burn
373 the shell. However, it is a beautiful material they can use for these items without harming
374 anything. I think taking care of the local people is like the alpha and omega. They know me
375 there, so it's a bit like my family. I translated a menu into English for a lady who owns a
376 restaurant in case tourists visit. She will never sell turtle eggs there again, not because she
377 understands why turtles are essential, but because someone she likes translated it for her, and
378 treated her nicely, so she does it for me because she knows I love turtles. But this is only possible
379 due to respect. It's challenging to convey this to volunteers because they sometimes send me
380 pictures where someone is wearing shorts, and people passing by think it's some loose woman.
381 So, I always explain to them that they represent the project, and it's written in their volunteer
382 agreement that they should dress appropriately. When the director of a school in Borneo calls
383 me and says it's great that the girl taught, but she didn't wear a bra under her shirt, it's a real
384 problem. This is just difficult. These people must understand that they work with the local
385 community and that it is essential, so they have to behave accordingly, not telling the locals to
386 get used to it because they feel hot; that's just how it is, so such a person shouldn't go there. I
387 meet with every volunteer before they go there, but even after spending two hours online or
388 having coffee with someone, I can't really tell how they will behave once they are there.

389 **How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both**
390 **in terms of environmental impact and financial support?**

391 Financial support is about constantly raising those funds. The money is collected in
392 increments of fifty crowns. Some people contribute, for example, a hundred crowns every two
393 months, and some earnings come from stalls at various events such as travel festivals, zoos, etc.
394 When I have a lecture at a school, I ask for fifty crowns per student, and all that money goes
395 towards the salaries of the conservationists. The income must be variable, but of course, it
396 would be great if someone gave us three million, and we had peace of mind for two years.

397 However, at the same time, I feel that if we stagnate and stop the activities to raise awareness,
398 then if the funds run out, it would be difficult to restart the process because people may not
399 have heard about it for a few years. So, it's better to keep developing those activities and
400 maintain the initiative for the long-term sustainability of the project. Right now, I am very glad
401 that there is some reserve. It's not like at the beginning when I was afraid of whether I could
402 gather enough money for the month to pay the salaries of all the conservationists. Now there is
403 some money as a reserve, so I don't have to worry about that, and we can even expand the
404 project, which is a great feeling that it has progressed this way. In terms of environmental
405 sustainability, I think it relates a lot to education and communication with the locals because if
406 they understand the importance of their environment, they will treat it better. This is precisely
407 why it's important to collaborate with the locals because if it were all up to me, and I decided
408 to have a child or stopped going there, the whole project would fail. Fortunately, that hasn't
409 happened, even during the COVID-19 period when I couldn't go there for three years. So, we
410 said at home that if the project survived COVID, it must survive a baby. I'm turning thirty-eight
411 in February, and we wanted a child, but I didn't want the project to end just because I suddenly
412 wanted something so private. Since it's mainly in the hands of the locals, and I somehow help
413 and support them, it didn't have to end.

414 **What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get**
415 **involved in sea turtle protection in Indonesia?**

416 To write me. With volunteers, I always try to figure out what skills they have and what
417 they enjoy, and based on that, come up with something tailored for them. Everyone can do
418 something that will help us. Today, the program is so broad that someone can create a new
419 sticker that I currently need. Someone can help me analyse things from Excel... everyone enjoys
420 something different. Someone can go there and write an article for the newspaper about it. It's
421 like, when someone comes and says they want to help, we discuss what you're good at, what
422 you enjoy doing, and where you have contacts. Would you like to maybe give a lecture at your
423 former school? Or set up an exhibition somewhere? It's very much about specific individuals,
424 and we are definitely grateful for anyone who wants to help.

Appendix 3: Interview with Lucie Čižmářová, MSc

1 **What has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation?**

2 The numbers of marine turtles of all species are declining rapidly for several reasons -
3 marine pollution, and loss of their natural rookeries, but mainly due to poaching of turtles for
4 meat and collection of their eggs. As part of my work in Indonesia to protect wildlife,
5 particularly against illegal trade, I am also focusing on this issue.

6 **Please tell me how your journey in sea turtle conservation in Indonesia started.**

7 I was in Indonesia for the first time in 2012 as a volunteer at a rescue centre for the
8 endemic Sumatran laughingthrush (*Garrulax bicolor*). There I met František Příbrský, who,
9 like me, studied at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. After graduating in 2014,
10 we returned to Indonesia and built a rescue centre for Sunda Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*)
11 - The Kukang Rescue Program and Sunda Pangolin (*Manis javanica*) - The Trenggiling
12 Conservation Program. Over time, we added more activities. The fight against illegal animal
13 trade is proving crucial to maintaining viable populations of many wildlife species, including
14 sea turtles.

15 **Which personal connections or experiences have prompted you to focus on sea turtle**
16 **conservation in Indonesia?**

17 We prepared joint raids on smugglers of various wild animals, including turtles, together
18 with the local police, local investigators and also with Zoo Ostrava, Zoo Olomouc, Zoo Liberec
19 and the non-profit organization Lestari. I am also familiar with people from the Turtle
20 Foundation, an organisation that focuses on sea turtle conservation not only in Indonesia.

21 **What values are particularly important to you that have influenced your work in**
22 **Indonesia?**

23 I am an animal conservationist through and through. However, working in this field in
24 Indonesia means a lot of patience, it is important to learn about the local culture and lifestyle of
25 the people and to realize that working with the local community is the key.

26 **How did the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic's support for the sea turtle**
27 **conservation project in Indonesia influence your decision to get involved?**

28 I don't have a sea turtle conservation project but in 2020 we received money thanks to
29 the "Small Local Development Assistance Project" from the Ministry of Environment of the
30 Czech Republic and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Indonesia, which helped us to
31 complete another school. Namely, our "Kukang School" in Bandar Baru village in North
32 Sumatra motivated the allied Basukum community represented by Indonesian Tomas Tarigan
33 to build their own "School at the End of the World". Thanks to this school, the children of this
34 village now get the chance to not only receive an environmental education but also learn English.

35 In 2021, we received this grant to build what we call the "Kukang Coffee House" where
36 we store and receive our organic coffee. The whole project is called Kukang Coffee and was
37 born to help the sustainable livelihoods of the farmers in our partner village of Kuta Male, while
38 contributing to the conservation of the local environment. We have created a community of
39 coffee producers, in collaboration with whom we have developed a methodology to sustainably
40 grow and process high-quality coffee, which we buy from them at a price that is profitable for
41 them. In exchange, these farmers have pledged not to hunt protected animals.

42 In 2021, our centre was visited by the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Richard Brabec,
43 who promoted our conservation activities here and signed a Letter of Intent with the Minister
44 of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, Ms. Siti Nurbaya Bakar, which is
45 the result of several years of efforts by the ministries of both countries to cooperate in the field
46 of environmental protection and sustainable development.

47 **What role does the ministry play in your current work?**

48 We are still in contact.

49 **What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like?**

50 As I wrote above, I am not primarily involved in the conservation of sea turtles, but of
51 Sunda slow loris, Sunda pangolin and other rather small mammals of Indonesia. The day-to-
52 day work varies whether I am in the field or not. I am an employee of Zoo Olomouc and I go
53 to Indonesia for a few months of the year where I co-manage a local foundation. So during my
54 time in Indonesia, I focus on nocturnal monitoring of wild animals, installing photo traps,
55 investigating illegal trade and veterinary care for animals. However, much of my work here and
56 in the Czech Republic is also computer-based - communication with partners, graphic
57 documentation, social networking, scientific outputs and last but not least presentations at
58 schools and international conferences.

59 **Which challenges are you facing in your daily work? How do you overcome them?**

60 In the beginning, one faces mainly the challenges of a completely different culture in a
61 developing country. Over time, bureaucratic complexities are added. Patience and a good team
62 of people are vital.

63 **When you reflect on your work in Indonesia: To what extent have your motivations and**
64 **expectations been fulfilled? What obstacles have there been?**

65 In the beginning, one has big plans and a timetable, which is probably impossible to
66 fulfil after getting into the Indonesian lifestyle. However, after time of learning about this
67 diverse country and the complexities of the conservation approach, one changes a lot in style
68 and goals and projects to be most effective in a given location/country. Long-term and
69 sustainability is necessary, then positive changes can be achieved.

70 **How do you view your work with communities?**

71 As I mentioned above, working with the local community is crucial to make activities
72 in the area work and be sustainable in the long term. It is also important to educate about
73 conservation and this is best started by the youngest children, which is why we run an English-
74 environmental school "Kukang School" under our programme.

75 **How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both**
76 **in terms of environmental impact and financial support?**

77 It is impossible to protect individual species of animals unless humans also protect their
78 natural habitat. That's why we also work a lot with local farmers on sustainable crop production
79 - we have a separate organic coffee project - Kukang Coffee, and we help them with
80 agroforestry, organic fertilizer production, etc. We are building biodiversity measures on the
81 land where we have our bases. In terms of financial support, our most important partners are
82 the European zoos, especially the Czech ones, without whom we could not function. Then there
83 are grants and individual donors.

84 **What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get**
85 **involved in sea turtle protection in Indonesia?**

86 I would not like to consider myself an activist, but rather a conservationist and scientist. The
87 important thing is to really want to and to face the many difficulties that are guaranteed to arise.
88 Long-term commitment is also important. But I would definitely recommend reaching out to
89 good non-profit organizations that deal with the issue and maybe start volunteering with them.
90 Gaining experience is very helpful.

Appendix 4: Interview with Petra Klembarová

1 **You have more experience working in Sri Lanka than in Indonesia, right?**

2 I haven't been to Indonesia, I was in Sri Lanka this February-March, it was at the turn
3 of the month. Otherwise, with the project, I tend to go to environmental events, Earth Days and
4 so on, where I either give a short lecture or talk to people at the stand afterwards and talk about
5 the products, but we'll get to that later.

6 **What has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation?**

7 It doesn't really stem from an interest in turtles... I study natural sciences, and
8 coincidentally, Hanka Svobodová is also involved in teacher education with a focus on research.
9 She knows my teacher from elementary school, who happened to love biology, and with whom
10 I met and talked about studying natural sciences. She gave me Hanka's contact, suggesting that
11 I might find it interesting or that I could somehow help because it involves things related to
12 nature. Well, that's how it started. I called Hanka, and she said that I could help in some way. I
13 started with events and later with helping with the project because I also like little children.
14 Hanka had a little girl with whom they went to Sri Lanka, so it was partly assistance with the
15 project and partly helping with babysitting, and that's how the turtles came into the picture.

16 **Please tell me how your journey in sea turtle conservation in Sri Lanka started.**

17 They had been trying to expand the project there for a while, and Hanka Svobodová,
18 I'm not exactly sure through which project, but she met someone from the Ministry, from the
19 Department of Wildlife of Sri Lanka. He studied here in the Czech Republic. I don't know how
20 they met, but they did and talked about the situation of turtles in Sri Lanka. Also, there are
21 regular studies on what species live there and how many of them, which is quite significant.
22 They also connected with the Czech consul there, and they somehow went there during COVID-
23 19 for a while, and someone partially mapped it. Before me, there was an effort to write some
24 kind of, I don't know if it was a bachelor's or master's thesis with a survey of those centres. So,
25 people had been there, but there was no solid thing that worked. It was more like monitoring,
26 so Hanka wanted to try to establish some contacts or actively support centres that were doing
27 the conservation well. So, it was Hanka's initiative for the project. It was necessary; it couldn't
28 be solved remotely, so it was necessary to go there and solve it on the spot. So, it began to be
29 planned. I was asked if I would be interested - if I would be willing to go and help with the
30 project. It was planned for a longer time because it was still being postponed due to the civil

31 unrest they had there, so gradually, details and the program of what we wanted to achieve there
32 emerged.

33 I think the project itself primarily influenced me because I didn't get into it with the
34 mindset of going to protect sea turtles, but more with the idea that I could help with some form
35 of conservation. I believe they taught me to appreciate the opinions of others and consider them
36 entirely differently in connection with how other people may think and about the value of
37 conservation. I've always believed that any form of protection is important in some way, and I
38 probably wouldn't be able to do something on my own all of a sudden. So, it's more like—this
39 may sound uplifting—but gratitude for being able to contribute in some way to something I
40 believe makes sense.

41 **When you reflect on your work in sea turtle conservation: To what extent have your**
42 **motivations and expectations been fulfilled? What obstacles have there been?**

43 I generally don't have many expectations. I expected it to be great and completely
44 different because I had never been to an exotic country like that. At the same time, I was grateful
45 to be able to go with someone who knows how to work with people or has contacts there. So
46 that's another thing you learn – how amazingly some people can communicate, seek contacts,
47 and interact with others. Even across the language barrier, Hanka is incredible; she
48 communicates with everyone and arranges everything. So, expectations... I really wanted to see
49 the turtles because a turtle in nature is... I hadn't seen one before, and I wanted to. That happened,
50 so that was a big fulfilled expectation. Also, witnessing the hatching of the baby turtles was
51 beautiful. The goal was for my presence to contribute to the project in some way, whether
52 through support, some administrative work, or anything I could help with so that it truly made
53 a difference and I wasn't just an additional burden. The aim was for it to genuinely help.

54 **What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like?**

55 I would say it consisted of three parts. The effort was to monitor the centres, visit as
56 many as possible, and see how they treat turtles and visitors, and how the finances are managed.
57 Another part was to visit as many hotels on the coast that send tourists somewhere. Often, hotels
58 also arrange services for tourists, so they send them on trips, and people travel to Sri Lanka to
59 see turtles. Trying to establish cooperation with them, ideally directing them to good centres
60 that treat turtles well or have few flaws. The other thing was in those centres that wanted some
61 help, or maybe there was an effort to communicate and somehow improve, to try to help with
62 already specific things.

63 **Which challenges have you faced in Sri Lanka?**

64 Inadequate knowledge of English. Or, let's say, not explicitly... a person knows English
65 words and even uses them, but the pronunciation is very specific among the Sri Lankans, and
66 since one is not familiar with it and not fluent, it took me a while to grasp what they were saying.
67 In contrast, when you see someone communicating with different people, each with a slightly
68 different language, they pick it up very well and fill in the gaps, so I think I was significantly
69 slowed down in this way until I caught on.

70 **How long did it take you to overcome that?**

71 We were there for almost a month; I think the first week was critical. After that, you
72 somehow get used to their language and pronunciation, and partially to the culture. You have
73 to rise above certain things, and you can't approach them from the perspective you're used to
74 here. That's probably another thing; you can see that there, things really have to be taken step
75 by step, slowly, and one has to rise above, realizing that you can't handle everything at once,
76 that you have to break it down and wait.

77 **Which challenges are you facing in your daily work in sea turtle conservation?**

78 In monitoring these centres, a person often does something uncomfortable for them,
79 especially if they have a relationship with animals and know how they function. For instance,
80 a turtle needs space, needs to go into the sea, needs to swim to memorize the beach, instincts,
81 and so on. Then you see turtles, which, for example, it's quite common for them to be in a small
82 pool, rubbing their fins there, being together with herbivores and carnivores, and one bites the
83 fins of the other because they are injured, or they feed an herbivorous turtle with chicken livers.
84 These are all things that a person sees while going through the centres, and usually, they don't
85 go there thinking, "I'm checking the centres," they go there as an ordinary visitor to see how
86 they actually present it to the visitors. Or they take out a little turtle, and say, "Here, take a
87 photo with it and pet it", and now it's noon, and they say, "Well if you give me more money,
88 you can release it into the sea." Well, that turtle that has been there for a week has practically
89 no chance of survival, and the sand is sixty degrees because it's high noon. These are the things
90 that a person suffers from, and the more they have a connection to these turtles, the more
91 uncomfortable it is for them. They have a completely different approach to time, so it's quite
92 challenging when trying to cooperate with them, to arrange something, because their time
93 concept is quite different. It was sometimes quite demanding to reconcile it with their idea of
94 time when a person was there and wanted to manage as much as possible so that there was

95 already a foundation on which they could build. If a person is not there personally to oversee it,
96 it takes time.

97 **How do you view your work with communities?**

98 What was the effort, it doesn't completely concern turtles, but there was an effort to
99 incorporate them. There was a local women's production workshop that made things from
100 various grasses and straws, such as hats, handbags, coasters, and so on. A lot was purchased
101 from them with the idea of selling it at events to support their work. Additional items were
102 ordered when other project members visited two months later. Information about the workshop
103 was shared to support it, and there may have been requests to place turtles on the coasters, but
104 I'm not sure how that turned out. Later, I think there was some interaction with government
105 centres, not entirely accessible to tourists but looking to involve volunteers in the future. The
106 goal was to communicate with them, get to know them, and ask what they envisioned for the
107 event. Some people were found who protected turtles out of personal conviction and didn't have
108 any licenses, so if someone reported them, it would be a criminal offence for which they could
109 go to prison. The aim was to help them and connect them with the government so that if they
110 genuinely did it out of love for turtles, they could do it under official protection to make their
111 work immune to legal challenges.

112 **Since we are already on the topic of local communities, I would like to know if you think**
113 **that your practices differ from local people. We already mentioned the pools which is**
114 **something that happens also in Indonesia where they think they are somehow helping the**
115 **sea turtles but in reality, it is the opposite.**

116 We believe that many of them are aware that they are not helping and that it's just a
117 tourist attraction, their livelihood, and a source of income. We think that a large part of them is
118 conscious of this. At larger centres, we believe that the people carrying out these activities have
119 learned a few sentences about turtles, and they probably don't care whether they have a turtle
120 or a tourist; they get some money for it, and they are satisfied, without any concern for the
121 context. When you ask them an additional question, they may act as if they confidently answer,
122 but usually, their responses are completely incorrect.

123 **How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both**
124 **in terms of environmental impact and financial support?**

125 Financially, I don't know all the details of what's happening. Certainly, incredible
126 support comes from people who voluntarily contribute. As it is a non-profit organization,
127 people's contributions serve as a salary for conservationists or as a source of funds for repairs
128 or the construction of things, renting boats, especially on remote islands, so that conservationists
129 can travel there and bring supplies. I would say that this is quite a primary source. Everyone in
130 the project does it because they enjoy it; they don't receive any financial rewards for it. They
131 give many lectures to children and visit schools and universities, and for that, there is some
132 small financial amount. So, these people dedicate their time and enthusiasm to pass it on and,
133 at the same time, try to contribute to the project. Another financial aspect is when there are
134 events like Earth Day or some school events, eco-days, etc. The products are taken there, ideally
135 by supporting local producers, and they are simply sold to people. Regarding the sustainability
136 of the project, I think the people involved do it because they enjoy it and believe in it immensely,
137 and that is the foundation of everything. They try to dedicate their free time to it and make an
138 incredible effort to receive something from these people remotely, communicate with them, and
139 constantly check and maintain it, so that it continues to work even if they cannot go there every
140 year for, say, a month to coordinate and check everything.

141 **What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get**
142 **involved in sea turtle protection in Sri Lanka, Indonesia or - anywhere?**

143 You have to believe that what you're doing makes sense, whether it's on a larger or
144 smaller scale, and that every small thing a person does can make a difference. Don't see it as a
145 one-time action that will be enough but believe that it makes sense to work on multiple fronts
146 and not give up. When you contact someone in this way, don't approach it as if it's a vacation.
147 This often happens, that someone comes and thinks, "Yeah, I'll help with something a bit, and
148 then I'll enjoy myself." One can still enjoy it while trying to work on it.

149 It seems to me that many Czech people would like to protect (sea turtles), but the
150 problem is that in Sri Lanka, there are places called Protection Centres or something similar,
151 but it resembles more of a turtle zoo. So, people see it as, "Oh, a conservation centre," and even
152 if they later realize that what they are doing is wrong, they have already contributed by coming
153 there. So, the centre's names are quite deceptive for tourists, even for those who might know
154 how to handle that particular species. But, in reality, many people from Europe don't even know
155 how to behave towards animals when there is such a conservation centre.

Appendix 5: Interview with Zbyněk Hrábek

1 What has sparked your interest in sea turtle conservation?

2 Seeing with my own eyes the conservation situation of sea turtles right in the Pulau
3 Banyak Archipelago, Aceh Singkil on Bangkar Island, which was very inadequate

4 Please tell me how your journey in sea turtle conservation in Indonesia started.

5 My journey started when we started to clean the beaches of plastic waste together with
6 our former organization as part of our volunteer programs that we organized regularly every
7 month in the archipelago. During the 3 days we spent on Bangkar Island cleaning a 1.5 km long
8 beach, I discovered turtle egg poaching directly by local staff of another organization that was
9 then administering a turtle egg conservation program in partnership with the government. At
10 the time, this poaching was intertwined with corrupt behaviour and organised crime by one of
11 the richest businessmen in the region. It was a challenge to confront it all, but everything was
12 solved and the poachers were punished with 5-year imprisonment. We decided to improve the
13 situation for the future and devised a new programme to protect Bangkar Island.

14 Which personal connections or experiences have prompted you to focus on sea turtle 15 conservation in Indonesia?

16 I was already involved in conservation, especially of the rainforest and Sumatran tigers,
17 in my second year, when I trained a team of local people to protect and monitor the rainforest.
18 The incident with the turtle egg poachers and the following new conservation program required
19 me to train another team specifically for ocean conservation. To do all of this required constant
20 learning of new things, the characters of people, the workings of communities and religions,
21 government institutions, local laws, scuba diving, driving new boats, and lots of other skills that
22 are very fun for the men. There is nothing like being able to fight for the weak, to help while
23 constantly improving in all aspects. That and my tenacity probably played the biggest role in
24 my decision-making. I took and take it as an unfair disservice we as humans do to nature and
25 we also "cut the branch we sit on". Just like nature, I don't do things that don't make sense.

26 The personal contacts I have made are very rich. From the governor, the chief of police
27 and the chief of conservation of the province, the state rangers to the ordinary poor people,
28 which from my point of view are the most important in Indonesia as only the local people can
29 make a difference sustainably.

30 **What values are particularly important to you that have influenced your work in**
31 **Indonesia?**

32 My most important values are freedom, truth and naturalness. Everything else, including
33 moral values, derives from this. I like to do anything that gives me a higher purpose and also
34 the strength not to give up. No matter what the challenge or ambition. Protecting turtles, tigers,
35 elephants, rainforests or anything else. I have been living outside of the city for 8 years in
36 Indonesia and have been very influenced by the life of the local people, especially the rainforest
37 the ocean and nature in general. The amazingness of the whole complexity and processes, the
38 way everything works and is interconnected. I learned how humans and their everyday
39 behaviour play a huge role in all of this, and how we as a civilisation can destroy all living
40 things or, on the contrary, restore and benefit all living things. Probably not many people realize
41 it, but it's true.

42 **How did the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic's support for the sea turtle**
43 **conservation project in Indonesia influence your decision to get involved?**

44 I have never cooperated with or approached government authorities in the Czech
45 Republic. So, the Ministry of the Czech Republic has not influenced me at all.

46 **What role does the ministry play in your current work?**

47 None, and I don't think it has ever played any role in conservation in Indonesia. It is a
48 foreign country with its own government, and laws and Indonesians are very sensitive to being
49 influenced by foreign governments. What would probably play a role is to support conservation
50 programs in Indonesia, but that involves a lot of tiresome bureaucracy. In the end, a well-
51 intentioned person loses a lot of time and energy to other things.

52 **What does your daily work in sea turtle conservation look like?**

53 I managed all the programs we had and still have in Indonesia. My daily work involves
54 100% commitment 24/7. Less so now that I have a broken femur. For example, on the island of
55 Bangkar, I managed: Civil works, maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities, care of speed
56 boats for patrolling the ocean around the island, monitoring of turtle nesting sites day and night,
57 training and educating the team that carried out all the activities, do an inspection of fishing
58 boats, collection of plastic waste, taking care of the volunteers, organizing the work and
59 activities of the programs, dealing with and coordinating with the authorities and establishing
60 relationships with and educating communities.

61 Every day was very different for me. A lot has to be improvised in Indonesia. It's
62 challenging not only mentally but also physically because the ocean is often not an easy
63 environment for people to live in.

64 **Which challenges are you facing in your daily work? How do you overcome them?**

65 There were countless of them. Among the biggest ones in protecting sea turtles was an
66 angry mob of local people, when I didn't get bribed and had their family members arrested, they
67 were angry at me, as were the local police, as I confiscated evidence – a bag of turtle eggs from
68 the government and said I would only hand it over officially. But everything turned out well.
69 Then there was the tracking of the boat that was fishing with bombs in the area. You never
70 knew if the crew was going to drop a bomb on you or not. I also took the rough ocean at night
71 in a small boat as a big challenge, it was very uncomfortable, but I thought to myself that calm
72 seas don't make a good sailor.

73 The long-term challenges were of course training the team and changing the setup of
74 the turtle conservation on the island when the government made it difficult with their
75 unprofessional approach.

76 **When you reflect on your work in Indonesia: To what extent have your motivations and
77 expectations been fulfilled? What obstacles have there been?**

78 During my engagement, my expectations were about 60% fulfilled. As far as the team
79 of people is concerned, more than 80%. The whole situation was complicated by the state
80 apparatus, which was not willing to exclude employees who were working with poachers at the
81 time, and we had to constantly find compromises and solve problems with them. So we were
82 more or less keeping an eye on the poachers so that they didn't steal eggs again. The
83 government's approach in this is not strict like in Europe, for example, but they have to be
84 involved by law as the whole island is a state reserve. Even on the ocean there are certain state
85 laws and it is often difficult and expensive to comply with them all, but necessary in terms of
86 patrolling and fighting illegal activity. Even more so for foreigners.

87 I see the impact on local communities as a great success. There has been a big change
88 there during that time and with a kind word, concern and trustworthiness one achieves a lot as
89 people listen to them. It is not in a day, but many know for themselves what is right and what
90 is wrong.

91 **How do you view your work with communities?**

92 I see working with local communities as a priority for any conservation effort anywhere
93 in the world. It is not possible to establish an open relationship with them in a short period of
94 time. You have to get to know them, ensure you know how they live and what they do and try
95 to understand them. After that, some strategy can be established on how to work with them,
96 how to educate them and work with them. In Indonesia, it's even more interesting because every
97 community is different, they have their own language and customs or traditions. It's very
98 interesting and diverse.

99 Why is it important to change certain traditions and customs of communities? Because
100 we have changed entire ecosystems and how they function in a very short period, so it is
101 necessary to adapt to these changes. For example, turtle eggs are sold for food. It's seen as a
102 delicacy, something special. It has a long tradition. But it is also one of the many factors in the
103 rapid decline of sea turtles, and many species are now threatened with extinction. The local
104 people don't know this. From their point of view, not much has changed and if a foreigner or
105 even a local person comes and starts talking about how it's not right, they can't understand why.
106 Plus, it's their livelihood and often they need to be offered/provided with another solution. But
107 once the local community understands the information, we are passing on to them, they will
108 protect the sea turtles themselves and will not let foreign poachers near them either.

109 **How do you provide for the long-term sustainability of your conservation projects, both**
110 **in terms of environmental impact and financial support?**

111 This has not been successful so far. The former partner organisation, which was the sole
112 sponsor, had a different opinion on conservation a year and a half ago and so we are now looking
113 for new financial support. It's one of the many downfalls that everyone who builds something
114 goes through. A fresh start and a better setup in terms of sustainability. Now we have new
115 programs and new settings. I would like to see most programs operate financially independently
116 and sustainably without sponsors. That is, sponsors are only needed for initial investment or
117 innovation and not for running programs. In the event of a loss of support, the program can
118 survive and continue to operate. Not all programs can be set up this way, but most can. In terms
119 of the long-term sustainability of programs, I see this as the only measure of a workable model.
120 It can only be set up this way with local people and their understanding, financial income and
121 motivation.

122 **What advice would you give to other activists from landlocked countries who want to get**
123 **involved in sea turtle protection in Indonesia?**

124 What would I advise? Go ahead! Indonesia and all nature in general need our help and
125 support. Indonesia is one of the few countries with the most important ecosystems in the world
126 with its rainforests and ocean-coral reefs. If anyone is considering helping these ecosystems in
127 Indonesia, they should prepare themselves for flexible time, thinking, improvising and arming
128 themselves with patience in whatever path they choose. Education, patrols, reforestation,
129 dealing with plastic waste, whatever. Indonesia is not easy for environmentalists and activists
130 because of its bureaucracy and its difference from European countries, but it is definitely worth
131 it. You need to be cautious before getting to know local people and or projects. Not all people
132 and organizations are good, but many are and do their best. That makes the help all the more
133 important.

134 If everything worked perfectly, there would be no need to help. Thus, the main thing is
135 to have an open heart and mind. Everyone is good at something different and everyone can
136 contribute something anywhere in Indonesia. Be it short-term or long-term. I must not forget
137 that without respect and understanding in Indonesia, a foreigner will not get far and will not
138 help anything, thus refraining from arrogance, contempt and disrespect is very important.
139 People here are very open and friendly and if one decides to help them, they appreciate it very
140 much. And let's face it, people are what is destroying nature, but they are also the only solution
141 that can change it.