
The Oregonian

August 13, 2009

Loggerhead turtles are at risk of extinction, federal study finds

By Abby Haight

Populations of loggerhead sea turtles on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts are at risk for extinction, according to a report this week by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Pacific loggerheads, which nest in Japan and migrate to Hawaii and the waters off California -- and occasionally as far north as Oregon and Washington -- are being decimated by coastal fisheries off Japan, Mexico and by longline fisheries in the deep seas.

One study estimates that 30,000 loggerheads were caught throughout the Pacific in 2000.

In the past, the world's loggerhead population was lumped together and were considered threatened -- but not endangered.

But the fisheries service report followed nine loggerhead populations distributed across the globe. Experts with the Loggerhead Biological Review Team studied each population and assessed its status.

Of the nine populations, only two -- one in the Southwest Indian Ocean and the other in the South Atlantic Ocean -- were not in immediate risk of extinction. The others, including populations in the North and South Pacific Ocean, were at risk of extinction.

On May 28, the [Center for Biological Diversity](#), Oceana and the Sea Turtle Restoration Project filed a federal complaint, claiming the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service violated the Endangered Species Act by not increasing protection for threatened and endangered sea turtles.

Oceana has asked the fisheries board to list the North Pacific and Northwest Atlantic loggerheads as endangered and designate critical habitat and other actions to help the populations recover.