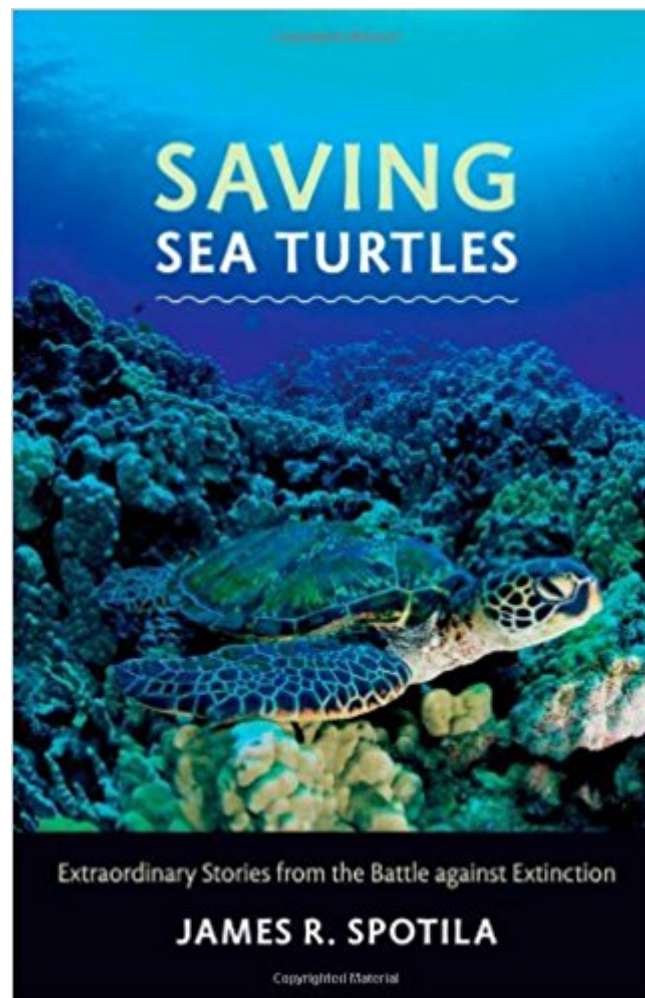




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# Saving Sea Turtles: Extraordinary Stories From The Battle Against Extinction



## Synopsis

In April 2007, eleven leatherback turtles captured the imagination of the public worldwide as they "raced" from Costa Rica toward the Galápagos Islands. Known as the Great Turtle Race, this event tracked these critically endangered sea turtles, drawing attention to their fragile status and generating data on the turtles vital to efforts to study and protect them. But the Great Turtle Race is just one of many tools marine conservationists use to inform people about the status, biology, and lives of the seven sea turtle species. Due to human actions, once-plentiful sea turtle population levels plummeted throughout much of the twentieth century, stabilizing somewhat only after Archie Carr and Jacques Cousteau popularized their plight. With *Saving Sea Turtles*, award-winning author James R. Spotila picks up where Carr and Cousteau left off, going inside the modern-day conservation movement to tell the tales of today's sea turtle conservationists. He provides a complete overview of sea turtle biology and life cycles, discusses the human and natural world threats they face, and examines the new methods and technologies humans are using to save them. Throughout, Spotila dots the narrative with stories of real-life heroes who risk life and limb to understand, track, and conserve sea turtles across the globe. Spotila has been at the forefront of sea turtle research and conservation for decades. His inspirational story of dedicated individuals, creative endeavors, and adventure reveals what is being done and what else we must do in order to ensure that these fascinating animals continue swimming in the oceans.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An interesting overview on the threats to the survival of sea turtles." (Birdbooker Report)"A lively, involving read." (Midwest Book Review)"A turtle biologist makes a plea to save sea turtles, remarkable creatures that start life buried in up to two feet of sand." (Science News)"A very engaging and entertaining account of past and present efforts to save sea turtles from extinction." (Choice)"If you enjoy aquatic life, you will love this book." (Steven King Books at the Beach Blog)"James Spotila conveys an infectious enthusiasm which hooks the reader from the start... Saving Sea Turtles will be enjoyed by all who have an interest in turtles and conservation." (Susan Omar The Biologist)

James R. Spotila is a professor of biology and the Betz Chair Professor of Environmental Science at Drexel University. He is one of the world's leading sea turtle researchers and conservationists and the author of the award-winning book *Sea Turtles: A Complete Guide to Their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation*, also published by Johns Hopkins.

The book in itself is fantastic! If you are into conserving sea turtles or just conservation in general, this book is very warming. The packaging on the other hand was pitiful! I was given the package from my mailman and the shoebox it came in was only head together by a couple of pieces of tape. The top was pretty much off when I got it. And not that the book is fragile or anything, but there was absolutely no bubble wrap or stuffing to keep my book from scratches or nicks.

"Saving Sea Turtles: Extraordinary Stories from the Battle against Extinction" is a interesting and important book. Professor Spotila really knows and loves his subject. What I liked about this book is the balance. Sure, the book is pro-sea turtle, but that's hardly a surprise. The balance here is that for every environmental horror story, there's a tale of success. The bad news (and there's plenty of it) is balanced by the good news. It's not all "doom & gloom". Also, it's surprisingly readable, something too often lacking in books of this oeuvre. I was reminded of the books by Richard Ellis, who writes very readable books about the sea and it's creatures. The author also gives us a couple lists of what we can do to help save sea turtles, and also nicely, there are a number of items that aren't so hard. Myself, I sent a check to the Monterey Bay Aquarium (they have a nice new exhibit that has a couple of sea turtles, I suggest you go for a visit!). More than just a book about saving sea turtles, this book is full of scientific facts about them, presented in a interesting yet informative manner. I found it very interesting to read about some of the new studies Professor Spotila had a hand in. And of course, sometimes the stories about encountering poachers and the like can be fairly

thrilling. Beautiful color plates add to the book's value and your reading pleasure.

James Spotila conducts a worldwide study into what is causing the decrease in sea turtles throughout the world. Going beyond just what is causing it, though, he carefully explicates why the decline is so important to all living things. The biggest curiosity seems to be "what loggerheads are doing...during their oceanic stage." Scientists can study what happens at each end of their journey, but not everyone agrees about what is happening en route. They know that turtles in the western Pacific are declining, but due to what? This mystery heightens the risk the turtles already face on land. For example, dogs, raccoons, birds, coatis, crabs, and crocodiles all are known predators near shore and in nesting areas. Humans have a surprisingly huge impact as well, in two ways. One is that real estate near the nesting areas is deemed more worthy than the marine habitat, so new homes and new pets, as well as pollution and traffic, all get closer to the areas essential to turtles for laying eggs. Beyond that, turtle eggs are sought by many for consumption. Turtle eggs placed in beer allegedly increases sexual stamina, a sort of Viagra for men in South and Latin America. Cantinas can charge a great deal for the perk, so looting is common in the endangered habitats where sea turtles lay their eggs. One conservation group launched a publicity campaign with an Argentinian model to discourage the practice, only to be shut down by women's groups offended by the scantily-clad model. Turtle eggs are also used in baking, and a quick Google search yields many recipes. Apparently, turtle eggs make a fluffier cake. In Malaysia, 90% of turtle eggs are harvested by people for these reasons. Global warming is suspected as another reason for the decline. One reason is that the sex of the turtle is determined by how hot the egg gets during incubation. Hotter beaches mean an increase in egg temperature that produces more females than males. Less males mean that even if the turtles are healthy, they can't always reproduce. Global warming also effects the food supply that the turtles depend on. The book is a fascinating read, with many anecdotal examples. The big shocker in it, though, has to be where the author promotes nuclear power as a way to avoid CO2 emissions, especially in India and China. Given what has happened in Japan after this book went to press, that solution may not go over well.

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