



Paloh Beach, Turtle Paradise in Indonesia's Border Line



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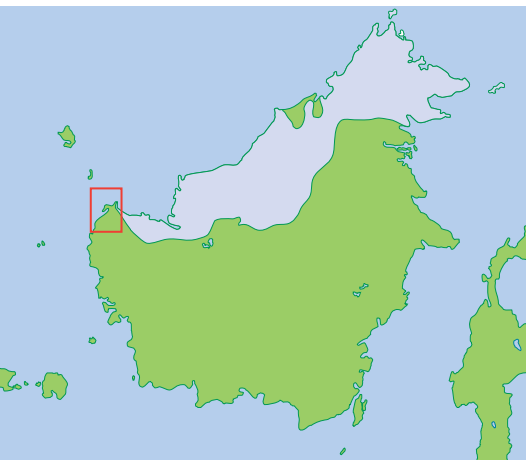
PALOH BEACH, SAMBAS, WEST KALIMANTAN

Paloh nesting beach is located in Sambas District, West Kalimantan, northern of the west coast of West Kalimantan province with total area reaching 6.395,70 km² or 4.36% of the total area of West Kalimantan Province. Sub district Paloh is one of the 19 sub districts that are part of the administrative region of Sambas District.

From the overall length of 63 KM long of coast in Paloh sub district, only 10 km that already has status as protected areas, namely "Taman Wisata Alam Tanjung Belimbing" (Marine Park). The rest 53 km is in the process of forming KKLD (Local Marine Protected Area) by Sambas District government.

The uniqueness of the characteristics in Paloh Beach is the Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricate*). Besides turtles, other unique characteristic is the mangrove ecosystem, which is Api-api (*Avicennia* sp), Mangrove (*Rizophora* Sp), Pedada (*Sonneratia* Sp), Nyirih (*Xycarpus granatum*), Berus (*Bruguiera* Sp) and Nipah (*Nypa*). Total land area of mangrove reaches 660 hectares. Other species that inhabit this region is the habitat of Proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*) and Ketam Tapak Kuda (*Tachipleus gigas*), both categorized as protected species. Estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and the Sea Pinery Ecosystems (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) further enriched this region.

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Although coast characterized, the livelihoods of Paloh people quite varied. Most of the livelihoods include farming, plantations (coconut, rubber and pepper), fishing and aquaculture (fish, lobster and crab mangrove) and manufacturing (furniture and preservation of fish).

The beach in Paloh sub district composed of coral reefs edge (fringing reefs) located in Tanjung Kemuning and Tanjung Datuk. Besides coral reef edge, there is also coral reef barrier, which is separated from the mainland coast by a lagoon. The area reaches about 1.080 ha. Beside coral reefs, Paloh Beach also has biodiversity that includes many kinds of fishes, and crustacean (mangrove lobster and crab) and primates (Proboscis monkey, typical primates' coast).



THREAT

The main threat to Paloh Beach areas is the exploitation of turtle eggs for commercial purposes. Thousands of turtle eggs are stolen from its nests almost every night along the 63 kilometers beaches. Communities around the coastal are using the eggs as a selling commodity. The eggs are mostly sold to Indonesia's neighboring countries (Malaysia) with a high selling price. During peak nesting season people these illegal trades can earn up to IDR 12 million per night. Eggs are sold for IDR 4000 each in the market.

Other threat is functional shift of the beach from turtle nesting habitat into becoming main transportation route between villages. This condition is disturbing sea turtle's nesting activity which resulted in the decline number of turtles coming up to lay eggs. A similar threat also came from the coastal area development plans by local governments which neglect the environment aspects of the area.

OUR ACTION

Until recently WWF has implemented various programs in Paloh Beach primarily related to monitoring of illegal eggs hunting and law enforcement. The intense and continuous efforts have successfully stopped the eggs stealing activities by the "main player" in the region. This reduction has impacted on the increasing amount of hatchlings. This success value is a result of a collaborative action between WWF with stakeholder, local government, and related authorities.

The success of the above activities resulted in the emergence of community response that cares for the turtles and the coastal regions. Community care is manifested in the form of community groups (NGOs). In addition to the emergence of NGOs as a form of public awareness, WWF also provide guidance to the community in creating green products, such as creating turtle-shaped souvenirs from wood waste.

Data collected by WWF has also produced baseline data on Paloh Beach turtle populations, followed with a process to establish Sambas Regional Marine Conservation Area estimated to cover around 250.000 hectares. Surveillance efforts in this area have also led to the process of forming a Joint Patrol comprise of Police water, Navy, Army Cross Border, District Police, Natural Resources Conservation Authority, Local Government, Institute for Management of Coastal and Marine Resources, WWF, and community groups to implement an early beach security. This initiative shows the seriousness of Paloh's community to implement a turtle conservation effort.

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