

# Ministry of Fisheries

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

### **BAN ON THE HARVEST, SALE, POSSESSION AND TRANSPORT OF SEA TURTLES, THEIR EGGS OR ANY PART OR PRODUCT OF A SEA TURTLE.**

Despite the expiry of the Fisheries Moratorium on Molesting, Taking or Killing of Sea turtles Regulations-2010 on 31 December 2018, the Ministry of Fisheries would like to inform all of the local communities, and people of Fiji of the following:

1. A ban on the harvest, sale, possession and transportation of sea turtle, their eggs or any part or product of sea turtles - remains in force under Regulation 5 of the Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations 2014 (OFMR).
2. The provisions of the OFMR apply to "all Fiji Fisheries waters" so would apply in all internal, inshore and offshore areas of Fiji.
3. The specific ban under the OFMR applies to the killing, taking, landing, selling or offering or exposing for sale, dealing in, transporting, receiving or possessing any of the following sea turtle species;
  - Leatherback sea turtle (Vonu Tutuwalu)
  - Green sea turtle (Vonu Dina)
  - Loggerhead sea turtle (Tuvonu)
  - Hawksbill sea turtle (Vonu Taku)
  - Olive Ridley sea turtle (Vonu Damu)
4. These species constitute all the common species currently found in Fiji waters, and the restrictions apply to their eggs and/or any of their parts or products.
5. The species of sea turtles found in Fiji are all listed internationally as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered and therefore require careful management to ensure sustainability.
6. The penalties for any breach of this ban are as follows;
  - For individuals, an instant fine of \$10,000, with the potential of up to \$50,000 in fines.
  - For corporations, an instant fine of \$20,000, with the potential of up to \$100,000 in fines.
7. The current provisions of the OFMR **DO NOT** allow for any exemptions to this ban, nor for permits to be issued by the Ministry of Fisheries for the harvest of any sea turtle, under any circumstances.
8. However, the Ministry of Fisheries is currently working to update and amend this legislation to continue to allow for permits to be issued to authorise limited cultural harvest by local i-Taukei communities.
9. It is anticipated that the permit process will be able to resume after April this year, following the completion of the current sea turtle nesting season.
10. When it recommences, this permit process will be carefully managed, and permits will continue to be at the discretion of the Honourable Minister of Fisheries.
11. A further Public Notice will be issued by the Ministry of Fisheries at the recommencement of the permit process for limited cultural harvest of sea turtle by local i-Taukei communities.

The Ministry of Fisheries will continue to enforce the ban on the harvest of sea turtles under the provisions of the OFMR, to ensure that the conservation, management, and protection of these iconic and highly endangered species would continue, and is strengthened.



Craig Strong  
Permanent Secretary for Fisheries