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Sea turtles are flagship species for the world's oceans. They traverse international boundaries during their migrations, serve as vehicles for marine nutrients to terrestrial habitats, and embody the often tenuous relationship between human action and ecosystem health. The East Pacific Ocean is home to some of the most dynamic marine ecosystems, and the most unique sea turtles. Marine biodiversity within this massive ocean region abounds in mangrove estuaries, seagrass pastures, coral reefs, the open ocean, and many other habitats, with sea turtles often the most conspicuous species present. The distinctive traits of the Eastern Pacific have resulted in the smallest leatherbacks, a singular morph of the green turtle, dark and steeply domed olive ridleys, and the most cryptic hawksbills on the planet. Only now are we beginning to understand how these varieties have evolved.

However, the oceanographic conditions that make this an epicenter of sea turtle activity also promote massive artisanal and industrial fishing efforts that, coupled with illegal harvesting of eggs and turtles, have led to declines of several turtle populations in the region. The essays and stories in Sea Turtles of the Eastern Pacific describe for the first time the history of this exploitation, as well as recent sea turtle conservation initiatives and scientific research in the region. The first third of the book considers the biology of the turtles, focusing on general overviews of current ecological management challenges facing the turtles' survival. The second third treats issues of marine policy related to turtle conservation. In conclusion, the book offers six compelling stories of conservation success. By the end, readers will have gained a in-depth view not only of these magnificent creatures, but also the people involved in research and conservation efforts in one of the most remarkable regions of our planet.