



## WWF-tagged turtle swims into troubled Kimberley waters

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Ana, a female green turtle satellite-tagged in East Java, Indonesia less than a month ago as part of a WWF turtle tracking project, is now closing in on the undeveloped Dampier Peninsula (Kimberley) coast where a contentious gas processing facility and port may be built.

[www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag\\_id=52947](http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag_id=52947)

The Western Australian Premier, Colin Barnett, has controversially said that he would name his preferred development site in the Kimberley by the end of the year, before existing industrial areas to the south (in the Pilbara) are fully assessed for their suitability for processing Browse Basin gas.

Ana is the second turtle in less than a year to be satellite-tracked by WWF as it travelled from Indonesia to the Kimberley. Dorte, another green turtle, was tracked to Roebuck Bay near Broome, between April and October.

The waters of the Kimberley – one of the few near-pristine coastal areas left on Earth - are the destination for globally-significant Humpback Whale migrations and now also appear to be even more important than previously thought as a point of convergence for other iconic, threatened marine creatures, like turtles.

"Ana is an important reminder of the extraordinary marine values of the Kimberley that could be put at risk from inappropriate development. Will Australia protect the marine wildlife 'superhighway' to the Kimberley?" said Paul Gamblin, WWF Program Leader - West.

"Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) development can involve the dredging of millions of cubic meters of rock which can smother and choke seagrass beds and coral reefs. Boating traffic and blasting can disturb and harm turtles, dugong and whales. Finding the right location, to avoid such impacts, is crucial because this is a major project which would be around for half a century or longer."

"We are not talking about building something the size of a shopping centre here; this is industrial development of a scale that would be clearly visible from space."

"The assessment process is not finished, yet the Premier has said that he would select a site anyway, even though the Environmental Protection Authority made clear this week that the next stage of the assessment should

compare Kimberley options with areas outside that region, such as the Pilbara."

"The Rudd Government has also reaffirmed that its statutory assessment of this project will include evaluating Pilbara options."

"We are calling on the Premier to keep the door open to a rational and efficient analysis of Pilbara options, to be undertaken in real dialogue with aboriginal communities and all key stakeholders. That is the only way a reasonable outcome will be forged for the community, the environment and industry."

"The stakes are high - this new finding using turtle tracking technology throws the spotlight on the true natural values of the magnificent Kimberley marine ecosystem and its link to the Coral Triangle to the north – the world's epicentre of marine biodiversity and the cross-roads of migration routes and breeding grounds for whales, turtles, dolphins and other precious marine species."

"The tropical seas of the Coral Triangle and surrounds, like the Kimberley, have global significance. Decision makers need to keep this in mind when considering where development might be permitted," Mr Gamblin said.

"Ana's journey has shown us areas where we need to focus our efforts. We need to tap into the secret lives of species such as turtles, so we can make decisions that conserve the full range of marine animal and plant life, and ensure their longevity."

For Tetha Creusa Hitipeu, National Turtle Program Leader of WWF-Indonesia, the monitoring work "confirms the existence of shared populations of turtle in Indonesia and Australia, and highlights the need for these two countries to work together towards the protection of the endangered sea turtles."

## **More information**

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To view Ana's journey across the Indian Ocean to the Kimberley, go to:  
[http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag\\_id=52947](http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag_id=52947)

For information on the Kimberley, go to:  
[www.wwf.org.au/ourwork/oceans/kimberley/](http://www.wwf.org.au/ourwork/oceans/kimberley/) and for information on the Coral Triangle go to: [www.panda.org/coraltriangle](http://www.panda.org/coraltriangle)

