

Peer Review

Review of: "Feeding Ecology and Activity Rhythms of the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle"

Kirsty Scott¹

1. King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia

This manuscript, "*Feeding Ecology and Activity Rhythms of the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle*", explores the foraging ecology of the hawksbill sea turtles at a study site in Martinique, the French Caribbean. Using CATS cam devices deployed for 48-hour periods, the authors recorded behaviour in foraging turtles, which they validated through sampling of prey at these locations. While this study is geographically localised and the constraints of the camera allow only short recording periods, it provides interesting insights into the behaviours and dietary preferences of this critically endangered species, which we can rarely observe in the wild.

The experimental design was well thought out. I particularly commend the authors' efforts to video observations by sampling and DNA barcoding sponges at these sites to improve their taxonomic resolution in their results. The integration of camera footage and molecular footage led to a rich discussion not only on dietary preferences but also on metabolites in sponges, general behaviours seldom seen, and conservation challenges in the region.

The paper is well written overall, requiring only minor editorial suggestions in the written text, but this does not detract from its quality. From the volume of information obtained from these short deployments, this study demonstrates the value of CATS cam devices for monitoring foraging turtles and highlights the use of computer-assisted video analysis. Overall, it offers a meaningful contribution to sea turtle research and conservation, and I would be happy to see it published.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.