



FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM

NPA Environment Centre

February 8, 2019

Turtle Conservation in West Papua



Beach Patrol Officer attends to a Leatherback turtle.

This week's guest speaker at Noosa Parks Association's Friday Environment Forum will be Oceanographer, **Dr Geoff Gearheart**. He has been working in marine conservation throughout Indonesia, mostly in West Papua, where he advised local Non-Government Organisations on sea turtle conservation.

Dr Gearheart will discuss his work with local Papuan non-profit groups that has saved

Raja Ampat's most important sea turtle nesting sites. Poachers were killing every animal that came onto nesting beaches of the uninhabited islands of Sayang and Piai. Now a permanent patrol post has been built and former poachers have been trained to protect the animals. **Thirteen years on, the results are compelling: from 900 nests in 2006, the rookery has recently comprised over 4,500 nests.** The program has also led to the recovery of the surrounding reefs damaged by blast and cyanide fishing. These areas are now attracting "conservation tourists".

To explain these remarkable achievements, Dr Gearheart now leads conservationists and nature lovers on expeditions to West Papua to experience first-hand some of the natural wonders of this remote corner of our planet.

Learn more about this work at geoffreygearheart.com and come along to the Environment Centre, 5 Wallace Drive Noosaville on **February 8** to hear about Geoff's initiatives and enjoy some enchanting marine photography.

Coffee and a chat will be on offer from 10am and the forum will commence at 10.30am. Join Valda and the Interpretive Birding group by meeting in the car park at 8.30am.

Whale Shark in the waters of West Papua.

