

## ROAMING THE OCEANS

**The Biology of Sea Turtles,  
Vol. II****Edited by Peter L. Lutz, John A.  
Musick and Jeanette Wyneken**

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The study of marine turtles as a discipline has expanded tremendously since the early 1980s. Much of the increase in research on these marine vertebrates was brought about by an increasing concern, more than three decades ago, that many of the seven extant species of turtle were heading towards extinction and that a better understanding was needed to preclude their demise.

Publication of *The Biology of Sea Turtles*, edited by Peter Lutz and John Musick, in 1996 represented a natural progression to this rapidly growing discipline. Featuring 15 review chapters on sea turtles, provided by 21 contributors, the stated objective of the first review volume was “not a mere compilation, its focus is on how sea turtles operate in, are adapted to, and are dependent upon their marine environment” (Lutz and Musick, 1996). Chapter subjects ranged from evolution and phylogeny to reproduction and nesting, migration, locomotion, foraging ecology, population dynamics, physiology, health problems and the effects of human-associated activities on sea turtle survival.

*The Biology of Sea Turtles*, vol. II, published at the end of 2002, is both a response to the success of its predecessor and a recognition that a single volume could not represent the wide range of work currently underway with marine turtles. Vol. II, ably edited by Peter Lutz, John Musick and Jeanette Wyneken, is a ‘must have’ in the libraries of all who are involved at any level of study, conservation or management of marine vertebrates and turtles. It is an excellent reference work and an easily read means of staying abreast of the increasing information on this taxon.

The stated objective of vol. II is to provide insight into the intersection between the science of sea turtles and their practical management. To this end, chapter subjects include prehistoric and historic interactions between humans and marine turtles, a highly detailed description of the anatomy of marine turtles, a sensory biology review, and a summary of approaches to

determining sex in sea turtles. Chapters on reproductive cycles, physiological and genetic responses to environmental stress, and ontogeny are also included. Broad reviews of sea turtle migration and habitat use, life history patterns, and the role of turtles in marine ecosystems are well written and very useful to any student of sea turtle conservation or management.

The quality of the writing is generally excellent, although completeness in content among individual chapters seems to vary more in vol. II than it did in vol. I; however, all chapters still summarize their topics sufficiently well. Like vol. I, there are formatting inconsistencies among chapters (e.g. literature cited, with some chapters numbering their references sequentially and others listing them alphabetically by author). In my view, the volume would have benefited from the addition of a bibliography designed to compile all literature referenced in the individual chapters. In review volumes, such as *The Biology of Sea Turtles*, a complete reference list can be a very useful resource tool.

In summary, *The Biology of Sea Turtles*, vol. II is an excellent complement to its predecessor, and the series is a valuable contribution to all interested in these marine reptiles. I hope the editors intend to continue producing sequential texts, and I look forward to Vol. III.

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**Reference**

**Lutz, P. L. and Musick, J. A.**, ed. (1996). *The Biology of Sea Turtles*, vol. I. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

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