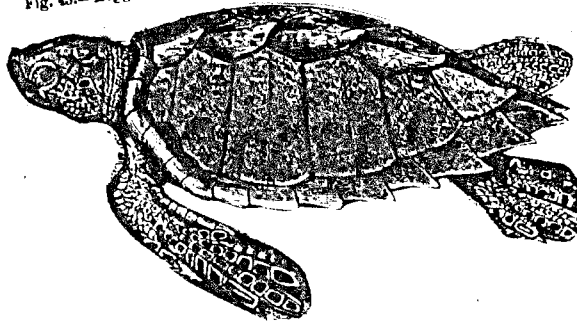


# TRAFFIC (International) BULLETIN

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Fig. 43.—Loggerhead Turtle (*Chelonia caouana*).



## *Special Report on Discrepancies in Published Data of Trade in Turtle Products*

This issue of the TRAFFIC International Bulletin is devoted entirely to a special report on the trade in turtle products compiled by Susan Wells.

TRAFFIC International together with TRAFFIC (USA) compiled a report on the turtle trade which was presented to a conference held in Washington in November 1979. The constraints of time and space prevented all the data being presented and in this Bulletin we are publishing important data relating to the discrepancies in the various statistics relating to trade.

We believe that these data are of utmost importance and require further action by governments and non-governmental agencies. Some of the data is unchecked, but it is all derived from published sources.

Copies of the data upon which this report and the joint report of TRAFFIC International and TRAFFIC (USA) were based are lodged with TRAFFIC International. Facilities can be made available to bona fide researchers to examine the data, providing sufficient warning is given.

John A. Burton  
Chairman  
TRAFFIC International.

TURTLE PRODUCTS LISTED IN ANNUAL CITES REPORTS 1976-1978  
SHOWING DISCREPANCIES WITH TRADE STATISTICS

Nine parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listed imports, exports or re-exports of Wild turtle products in their CITES annual reports between 1976 and 1978, but as was found when an analysis of the cat skin trade was made (The International Trade in Felidae 1977 by Tim Inskipp), there tend to be many discrepancies between annual reports from different countries. (See Table 1):

TABLE 1. CITES ANNUAL REPORTS - TURTLE PRODUCT IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

<u>SWITZERLAND</u>		
1976	1977	1978
Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 17 skins France 989 kg callipee Nicaragua 2 821 kg soup Fed.Rep.Germany  <u>Eretmochelys imbricata</u> COO 1 mounted specimen Indonesia  Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 289 crt. soup Canada 50 crt. " Australia 1 crt. " Austria 80 crt. " Nigeria 5 crt. " S. Domingo 152 crt. " USA 12 crt. " Qatar	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 10 037 kg callipee Fed.Rep.Germany 574 kg " Nicaragua (pre 4/2/77) 45:4 kg. frozen Fed.Rep.Germany red meat	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 15 skins Fed.Rep.Germany 1 554 kg callipash " 2 575 kg frozen meat Fed.Rep.Germany  Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 318 crt. soup Canada
<u>FED. REP. GERMANY</u>		
1976 (June-Dec)	1977	1978
Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 234 kg soup/meat Mauritius 12 665 kg " Costa Rica 15 600 kg " Somalia via Costa Rica	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 18 568 kg meat Somalia 31 819 kg " Cayman Is.  <u>Chelonidae spp.</u> 55 kg tortoiseshell Netherlands 871 pieces leather Italy Re-exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 710 kg meat Switzerland (from Cayman Is.)	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 2 370 kg meat Cayman Is. 2 603 kg skins Cayman Is.  Re-exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 337.6 kg meat Denmark 626.0 kg meat France 17 100.7 kg meat UK 28.8 kg soup Denmark .6 kg soup Australia 15 skins Switzerland
<u>UNITED KINGDOM</u>		
1976	1977	1978
Imports: Turtle unspec. COO 1 shell Seychelles  Re-exports: <u>Eretmochelys imbricata</u> COO 616 kg shell France (imported before 1/1/76) 215 kg " Japan 9.5 kg " Switzerland 9.5 kg " Turkey	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 14 kg raw scales Cayman Is. 3 072 kg tail and neck bone " 907 kg callipee "  Turtle unspec. 1 shell Seychelles	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 544 kg neckbones Cayman Is. 544 kg tailbones " 5.4 kg scales " 9 shells " 2 shell backs " 63 shell pieces "
<u>CANADA</u>		
1976	1977	1978
nil recorded	Imports: <u>Eretmochelys sp.</u> COO 5 artifacts USA (for customs training)	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 3 shells Philippines (pre-convention) Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 1 shell USA retained: <u>Chelonidae sp.</u> 5 carapaces

/continued over.....

....Continuation of Table I.

COO = country of origin  
 COD = country of destination  
 CTF = Cayman Turtle Farm

USA

	1977 (June - Dec)	1978
	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 1 preserved animal Australia <u>Lepidochelys olivacea</u> 138 prs. shoes Mexico * (via Spain)	Imports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COO 1 polished shell Canada 355 shell products CTF 57 kg shell products CTF 8 shipments CTF 8 lbs stew CTF 38 prs shoes Italy <u>Lepidochelys olivacea</u> 2 000 skins Mexico

COSTA RICA

\*misidentified or admitted by mistake.

1976	1977	1978
Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 2 000 eggs Bermuda 7 054 kg. callpash Netherlands 4 375 kg. flippers " 1 236 kg. trimmings " 200 kg. shell USA 7 000 kg. callpash " 4 500 kg. flippers " 2 400 litres oil " 2 200 pieces skin " 3 000 kg. meat "	Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 2 000 eggs Bermuda 70 live spec. USA (for scientific research)	Exports: <u>Lepidochelys olivacea</u> COD 1 carapace USA

MADAGASCAR

1976	
Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 10 stuffed turtles France 5 Jewellery pieces France	

INDIA

1976	
Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 50 kg shell Fed.Rep.Germany	

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1976 (Mar - Dec)	1977	1978
Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 1 dried shell UK 1 dried shell Australia <u>Eretmochelys imbricata</u> 6 stuffed turtles Australia	Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 1 shell Australia 1 mask " 1 skull USA  <u>Eretmochelys imbricata</u> 9 stuffed curios Australia 3 ornaments " 1 " USA 1 shell Australia	Exports: <u>Chelonia mydas</u> COD 1 stuffed turtle Australia 4 shells " 1 shell New Zealand 1 skull USA  <u>Eretmochelys imbricata</u> 4 stuffed curios Australia 5 shells " 4 " UK 2 masks Australia 1 piece Jewellery " 1 " " UK  <u>Cheloniidae spp.</u> 1 shell UK  <u>Lepidochelys olivacea</u> 1 shell USA

Table 2 below shows some of the many discrepancies between annual CITES reports for turtle products.

TABLE 2 DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN ANNUAL CITES REPORTS FOR TURTLE PRODUCTS

YEAR	CITES PARTY producing Report	IMPORT/EXPORT	PRODUCT	QUANTITY	ORIGIN/DESTINATION	RECORDED IN REPORT OF ORIGINATING OR DESTINATION COUNTRY
1976	SWITZERLAND	Imports	Soup	2 821 kg	From FRG	No
	UK	Re-exports	Shell	9.5 kg	To Switz.	No
	INDIA	Exports	Shell	50 kg	To FRG	No
	P.N. GUINEA	Exports	Shell	1 pce	To UK	No
1977	SWITZERLAND	Imports	Calipee) Meat )	1 037 kg) 45.4 kg)	From FRG	FRG re-exports 710 kg meat to Switz.
	CANADA	Imports	Artifacts	5	From USA	No
	COSTA RICA	Exports	Live specimens	70	To USA	No
	P.N. GUINEA	Exports	Skull ) Ornament)	1 1	To USA	No
1978	SWITZERLAND	Imports	Skins ) Calipash ) Frozen meat)	15 ) -1 554 kg) 2 575 kg)	From FRG	FRG re-exports 15 skins to Switz.
		Re-exports	Soup	318 crtns.	From Canada	No
	FRG	Re-exports	Meat	17 100.7 kg	To UK	No
	Costa Rica	Exports	Carapace	1	To USA	No
	P.N. GUINEA	Exports	Skull) Shell)	1 ) 1 )	To USA	No

Customs trade statistics and CITES annual reports rarely correspond; the former regularly recording larger figures than the latter (See Table 3). For example, in 1977 the Federal Republic of Germany recorded the import of 55 kg of turtle shell from the Netherlands in its CITES report. However Customs statistics for the FRG recorded the import of 8 281 kg of raw tortoiseshell, 1 095 kg of which came from the Netherlands, along with 4 700 kg of worked shell.

The UK CITES report for 1976 recorded zero imports of tortoiseshell (apart from one whole shell from the Seychelles, see Bulletin Vol.I No.10 p.3) and re-exports of 850 kg of tortoiseshell (616 kg to the FRG, 215 kg to Japan). UK Customs statistics recorded the import of 320 kg of shell from Tanzania, and the export of 1,742 of shell to Japan (508 kg) and France (1,234 kg).

TABLE 3 COMPARISON OF CITES ANNUAL REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT CUSTOMS STATISTICS FOR UNWORKED TORTOISESHELL

COUNTRY	1976		1977		1978	
	CITES REPORT	CUSTOMS STATISTICS	CITES REPORT	CUSTOMS STATISTICS	CITES REPORT	CUSTOMS STATISTICS
	IMPORTS Kg	IMPORTS Kg	IMPORTS Kg	IMPORTS Kg	IMPORTS Kg	IMPORTS Kg
FED. REP. GERMANY	0 (June-Dec)	3 937	55	8 281	0	(9 144 from Fiji 65 from ID)
UNITED KINGDOM	(1 shell)	320	14	26	5.4 (9 shells, 2 shell backs, 63 shell pie- ces) CTF).	-
SWITZERLAND	0	126	0	39	0	-
USA			0 (May-Dec)	1 656 from India 524 from Ecuador)	57 (+ 355 articles & 8 shipments) CTF	(164 from USA 9 673 from India)
COSTA RICA	EXPORTS Kg	EXPORTS Kg	EXPORTS Kg	EXPORTS Kg	EXPORTS Kg	EXPORTS Kg
	200 to USA	(170) (Imported by Japan)	0	(260) (Imported by Japan)	1 carapace to USA	(47) (Imported by Japan)
INDIA	50 (Oct-Dec)	21 460		82 855		11 918 (Jan & Feb only)

Unfortunately, in 1978 a number of European countries ceased to list tortoiseshell under a separate tariff heading in their customs statistics, which now makes it impossible to compare customs figures with CITES figures.

Very few party states record turtle meat and skin under separate tariff headings in customs statistics. The exception is the US, for which several sets of figures are available, and these also show discrepancies (see Tables 4a and 4b).

TABLE 4a DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT SETS OF FIGURES FOR UNITED STATES IMPORTS OF TURTLE MEAT FROM CAYMAN TURTLE FARM

SOURCE OF STATISTICS	1977* Kg	1978 Kg	1979 Kg (Jan-May)
US Customs Statistics	Not available	120 874	106 157
US Declaration of Import permits	28 169	49 023	69 361
National Marine Fisheries Service	Not available	84 950	44 100
US CITES Report	(June-Dec) 0	(Stew) 4	-

\* In 1977 some meat was imported from other countries also.

TABLE 4b DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT SETS OF FIGURES FOR US IMPORTS OF TURTLE SKIN

SOURCE OF STATISTICS	1977	1978
US CITES REPORT	June-Dec 138 prs. olive ridley shoes from Mexico	33 prs green turtle shoes from Italy 2 000 olive ridley skins from Mexico
US DECLARATION OF IMPORTS	31 882 pieces and 2 987 prs shoes of olive ridley from Mexico.	5 706 pieces olive ridley from Mexico. 4 000 pieces green turtle skin from CTF.

According to TRAFFIC (USA), there are three possible explanations for the discrepancies:

- 1) we did not receive all the import documents requested from the Fish and Wildlife Service-Law Enforcement (FWS(LE)) based on the major ports of entry;
- 2) the meat came into ports from which we did not request import documents; possibly into San Juan and Puerto Rico which we are told imports large quantities of turtle meat and shell from the Cayman Turtle Farm for the tourist trade, or
- 3) trans-shipments are included in the US Customs import statistics, while the FWS (LE) and CITES do not include trans-shipments in their import figures.

Similarly published import figures are often lower than the import figures estimated from other countries' exports (See Table 5b).

TABLE 5b DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN TOTAL PUBLISHED IMPORT FIGURES AND ESTIMATED IMPORT FIGURES

COUNTRY	Published	Estimated	Published	Estimated	Published	Estimated
	1976 (Kg)		1977 (Kg)		1978 (Kg)	
Japan	46 060	70 782	45 818	44 036	44 039	89 263
Singapore	4 140	32 415	21 002	32 920	18 469	57 941
FRG	3 937	82 459	8 281	21 816	(not avail)	9 209
Italy	2 500	21 557	3 000	22 775	( " " )	784
Spain	1 531	10 159	824	0	1 080	9 144

Published figures taken from government statistics

Estimated export figures = total of imports from the country, using all importing countries with available figures.

Estimated import figures = as for estimated exports but using data for exporting countries.

Many of the discrepancies between the published and estimated export figures (Table 4a) are caused by the fact that Japan's published import statistics are often much lower than export figures of other countries to Japan. This is most noticeable in the trade with Fiji (Table 6a).

TABLE 6a DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN JAPANESE AND FIJIAN TRADE STATISTICS - UNWORKED TORTOISESHELL

YEAR	FIJI EXPORTS TO JAPAN <sup>1</sup> Kg	JAPAN IMPORTS FROM FIJI <sup>2</sup> Kg
1970	2 032	0
1971	1 016	0
1972	50 794	270
1973	183 873	607
1974	61 996	131
1975	8 279	91
1976	12 952	189
1977	0	82
1978	16 803	399
TOTAL	337 745	1 769

<sup>1</sup> Fiji trade statistics

<sup>2</sup> Japan trade statistics

Between 1970 and 1977 Fiji records total exports of raw tortoiseshell to Japan of almost 338 tonnes; in the same period Japan records total imports of only 1,769 kg. The discrepancies in trade with Indonesia are slightly smaller (Table 6b); between 1967 and 1978 Indonesia records exports of nearly 200 tonnes of raw tortoiseshell to Japan, and Japan records imports of only 62 tonnes from Indonesia.

TABLE 6b DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN JAPANESE AND INDONESIA TRADE STATISTICS - WORKED AND UNWORKED TORTOISESHELL

YEAR	UNWORKED TORTOISESHELL		WORKED TORTOISESHELL	
	INDONESIAN EXPORTS TO JAPAN <sup>1</sup> Kg	JAPANESE IMPORTS FROM INDONESIA <sup>2</sup> Kg	INDONESIAN EXPORTS TO JAPAN <sup>1</sup> Kg	JAPANESE IMPORTS FROM INDONESIA <sup>2</sup> Kg
1967	349	529	-	-
1968	900	1 082	-	-
1969	700	930	-	-
1970	1 304	736	-	223
1971	6 311	3 010	-	4 693
1972	8 956	7 197	-	41 595
1973	17 371	20 382	-	102 750
1974	14 229	2 693	-	97 917
1975	6 318	4 328	10 940	80 865
1976	47 221	6 464	50 773	89 194
1977	55 442	10 114	74 350	80 951
1978	40 368	5 735	47 150	55 198
TOTAL (1975-1978)	149 349	26 641	183 213	306 208

<sup>1</sup> Japan trade statistics

<sup>2</sup> Indonesia trade statistics

Similarly, there are considerable differences between trade figures for Japan and for the Philippines. The Philippines record exports of 109,174 kg to Japan between 1964 and 1977, while Japan records imports of 48,959 kg over this period (Table 6c).



TABLE 6c DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN PHILIPPINE AND JAPANESE TRADE STATISTICS  
- UNWORKED TORTOISESHELL

YEAR	JAPANESE IMPORTS FROM THE PHILIPPINES Kg	PHILIPPINE EXPORTS TO JAPAN Kg
1964	0	680
1965	0	3 401
1966	0	177
1967	187	13 333
1968	445	2 132
1969	2 329	10 000
1970	1 008	670
1971	583	548
1972	6 078	1 223
1973	13 446	7 100
1974	16 922	21 363
1975	1 488	8 316
1976	3 160	13 972
1977	3 313	26 259
1978	1 439	29 847
TOTAL	20 398	139 021

<sup>1</sup> Japanese statistics

<sup>2</sup> Philippine statistics 1964-1968 taken from JTSA report 1973  
1969-1977 taken from government statistics

I.S.C. Parker (The Ivory Trade 1979) found that although most of Japan's imports of raw ivory came via Hong Kong, the country of origin was recorded in Japanese trade figures. This accounted for a number of discrepancies found in the ivory trade figures since exporting countries usually record the final country of destination.

However, for the tortoiseshell trade there is very little recorded trade between Hong Kong and Japan in either sets of statistics, and the differences are minimal (Table 7). Although Hong Kong is a major importer of raw tortoiseshell (102,275 kg in 1978) according to its statistics, it only re-exports a small proportion - 10,128 kg in 1978, mainly to Mainland China and Hong Kong.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND HONG KONG'S STATISTICS

HONG KONG'S RE-EXPORTS TO JAPAN (KG)	JAPAN'S IMPORTS FROM HONG KONG (KG)
1974	134
1975	1 063
1976	1 400
1977	1 662
1978	881

Discrepancies between Japanese statistics and exporting countries statistics could be explained if Japan records stuffed turtles or polished shells under the worked tortoiseshell heading, and the exporting country records them under the unworked tortoiseshell heading. Japanese statistics record higher volumes of worked tortoiseshell coming from Indonesia than Indonesia records exporting to Japan. From 1975 to 1978 Japan recorded 122 tonnes more than Indonesia recorded; over the same period Indonesia recorded 122 tonnes more unworked tortoiseshell going to Japan than Japan recorded importing. Indonesian statistics, however, do not tally with statistics for other countries besides Japan. Although Indonesia records exports to Singapore, the latter does not record imports from Indonesia, and in 1978 Indonesia recorded exports of 125,000 kg to Hong Kong, but Hong Kong recorded imports of only 75,000 kg from Indonesia.

However, in a few cases Japanese imports of raw tortoiseshell are higher than those for the corresponding exporting country. For example, Japan records imports of 2,152 kg tortoiseshell from Tanzania in 1976, whereas Tanzania records exports of only 474 kg to Japan. Differences of this magnitude may however be accounted for by some of the factors mentioned in the introduction; for example an intermediary re-exporting country may be involved which Tanzania records exports to, while Japan records only country of origin, not country of consignment. Japanese imports from Kenya are also higher than those recorded in Kenyan statistics - in 1978 2,850 kg as opposed to 761 kg.

Japan is not the only country where such discrepancies occur. In 1976 Ecuador recorded the export of 10 tonnes of raw tortoiseshell to the FRG; and the FRG recorded only four tonnes total imports in 1976, and only eight tonnes in 1977. In 1977 Ecuador recorded exports of 17 tonnes of raw tortoiseshell to Japan and nearly 20 tonnes to Italy. Neither Japan nor Italy recorded imports from Ecuador, and Italy's total imports were recorded as only three tonnes.

India recorded enormous exports to the FRG (over 20 tonnes), and Japan over eight tonnes in 1977, which again were not recorded in the importing country's statistics.

European countries have made no mention of imports from Fiji in their statistics: in 1976 Fiji recorded exports of over 10 tonnes to the FRG, over 20 tonnes to Italy and over 10 tonnes to Spain; the total imports recorded by these countries were considerably lower than these figures alone.

The FRG does not record the country of origin for most of its imports; in 1976 693 kg came from the Netherlands, and in 1977 1095 kg. In 1976 however the Netherlands recorded exporting 62 tonnes to the FRG.

Discrepancies are also to be found in the skin and leather trade data. Mexico records zero exports of raw turtle skin to Japan in 1975 and 1976 but Japan records imports of 35 tonnes from Mexico in 1976, and a considerable volume in 1977 and 1978 from Mexico. This may well be illegal trade as Mexico has a ban on the export of raw turtle skins.

TABLE 8 COMPARISON OF JAPANESE AND MEXICAN TRADE STATISTICS FOR RAW TURTLE SKIN

YEAR	JAPANESE IMPORTS FROM MEXICO <sup>1</sup>	MEXICAN EXPORTS TO JAPAN <sup>2</sup>
	Kg	Kg
1975	Not recorded	0
1976	35 231	0
1977	5 244	Not available
1978	1 061	Not available

<sup>1</sup> Japanese statistics

<sup>2</sup> Mexican statistics

# "When the Turtle Collapses, the World Ends."

(Natural History, USA)

General Anastasio Somoza-debayle was not known for being a friend of the green turtle (*Chelonia Mydas*). His reputation had more to do with the way he ruled Nicaragua. But in 1977, even though he was reported to have an economic interest in the country's turtle business, he banned commercial-export turtling and closed the several processing plants operating in the country. His action was at least partly due to the urging of Bernard Nietschmann ("When the Turtle Collapses, the World Ends", June/July 1974), who flew to Nicaragua at Somoza's request in 1975 to talk about the plight of the fast-disappearing turtles.

In July of 1979, Somoza was deposed (he is now living in Paraguay) and Sandinista revolutionaries formed a new government. The turtles were not, of course, central to the revolution, and their fate under the new government was unclear until last fall, when a government representative announced that Nicaragua, although it was in financial trouble, would try to establish a marine sanctuary for the turtles if economic and technical assistance were forthcoming from the international community.

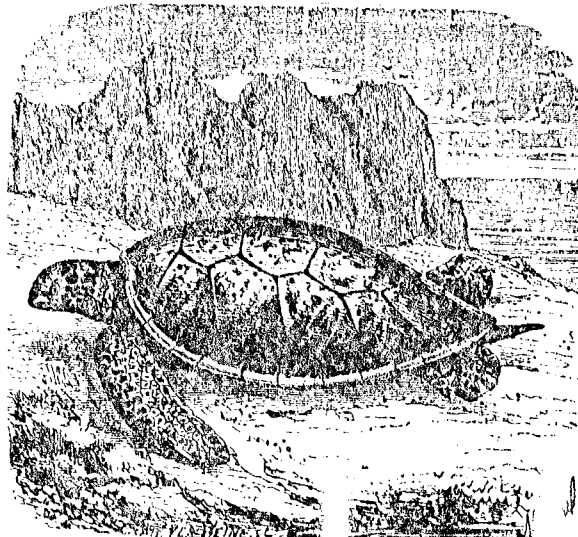
Nietschmann, who was at the conference where the announcement was made, thinks the aid will come. If it does, it will mean that the last large population of green sea turtles in the western Caribbean will be protected where it breeds, on the Tortuguero nesting beach in Costa Rica (made a national park in 1976), and in its feeding area, the rich marine pastures of sea grass off the eastern coast of Nicaragua.

But the turtles were only half of Nietschmann's story. He had become deeply involved with the Miskito Indians, who traditionally depended on the turtle for food. In the 1960s, when the first turtle-processing plants were set up in Nicaragua, the Miskito began their entry into a cash economy, hunting the turtles to sell. The turtles would have eventually disappeared if this increased hunting pressure had kept up, but stopping commercial turtling left the Miskito stranded partway through a cultural change. What provision a marine sanctuary would make for them, or for subsistence turtling, is not known, but their reaction to the 1977 closing of the plants was clear.

Nietschmann reports in his book *Caribbean Edge* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1979), the Miskito he was closest to wrote him in 1977, saying:

"This is my word to you.  
The government put the turtle on control.  
It was one thing that you the one that do it.  
All your friends give you Hell.  
You get lots of cursing.  
Was sad."

Fig. 40.—Green Turtle (*Chelonia Mydas*).



# Fauna and Flora Trade Review

Beginning in Bulletin Vol II No 5 there will be a review of the imports and exports of fauna and flora available from the annual CITES reports by the signatory states to CITES for 1978.

This data is at present being compiled, and even on the small amount of work so far completed a surprising number of discrepancies have appeared.



Glossary of terms:

- TRAFFIC = *Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce*
- CITES = *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*

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