

CORRECTION OF A TRANSVERSE FRACTURE OF THE RIGHT HUMERUS IN AN OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLE (*LEPIDOCHELYS OLIVACEA*)

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Despite the international and local protection legislation of marine turtles since 1972, marine turtles are still been extensively exploited in Sri Lanka for their eggs and meat. Unfortunately, many turtles are accidentally caught and drowned in fishing gear each year. One such Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), smallest of the five marine turtles found in Sri Lanka, weighing 30kg with near disembodiment of the right flipper, was presented to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital through the Turtle Conservation Project (TCP), Kosgoda.

Several lateral and marginal keratinous scutes of the turtle were damaged in the carapace. The left flipper was damaged with a cut up to the subcutaneous tissue and healing had already started. The right flipper was almost disembodied and was hanging only with few muscles and the humerus was fractured transversely.

The skeleton of sea turtles is composed of 3 parts of bones and cartilages, namely the skull and the axial and appendicular skeleton. The skull composed of braincase, jaws and hyoid apparatus; the axial skeleton is composed of the carapace, vertebrae, ribs and derivatives of the ribs. The appendicular skeleton includes flippers, hind limbs, pectoral and pelvic girdles. The derivatives of axial and appendicular skeleton form the plastron.

It was decided to correct the right flipper by retrograde intra medullary pinning of the humerus. Anaesthesia was induced with 300 mg 5 % ketamine given intramuscularly to the proximal cranial muscle mass of the foreleg. The local anaesthetic Lignocaine 2 % (60 mg) was injected to the muscle mass of the right flipper to prolong the anaesthesia. Ketamine 100 mg each was used to maintain anaesthesia 40 minutes and 70 minutes after the first dose, respectively. The muscles and the skin were sutured with 0.4 mm suture nylon. Enrofloxacin 150 mg was injected intramuscularly, daily to the forelimb for 2 weeks.

The turtle was kept under shade in a pit made of polythene filled with 15 cm sea water and the water was changed daily. The appetite resumed the day after the surgery (200 g of fish initially) and the amount was increased up to 500 g daily. It started to flap the right flipper on the second day after surgery. The turtle is still under observation at TCP-Kosgoda, 6 weeks after surgery.

The commitment of the staff of TCP, Kosgoda is greatly appreciated.