

WILDLIFE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA



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VERNACULAR NAMES OF TURTLES IN THE NEW GUINEA AREA

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A knowledge of the vernacular names of turtles in the New Guinea area (Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, Indonesia) can be of benefit to researchers in a variety of disciplines: the field biologist investigating distribution patterns and animal ecology, the conservation officer concerned with population status and economic potential of management, the ethnologist documenting the social importance of various animal species, or the linguist interested in the completeness of a vocabulary or comparisons with other languages. For each of these research areas, a prior knowledge of the local names for turtles can facilitate the initial field contacts during the preliminary phases of a study project. With this aim in mind, an attempt has been made to compile a list of the vernacular names of turtles used in the New Guinea area. Because of the large number of separate languages currently spoken, only a relatively brief survey has been accomplished, encompassing 77 languages and 212 names. It is hoped that by publishing these preliminary results there will be a stimulation of further work leading eventually to as complete a listing as possible.

The turtles occurring in the New Guinea area are represented by 13 currently recognized species from 5 different families (Pages 2-4). Approximately half of these are marine turtles inhabiting the waters of the South Pacific, and reported from various localities along the coasts and from the islands. The other half represent freshwater species with limited areas of distribution. *Carettochelys insculpta* is restricted to the southern rivers from the Kokenau area of Irian Jaya to the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea and northern Australia. *Pelochelys bibroni* is a widespread but rare species occurring both north and south of the Central Ranges, its main area of distribution being further west

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in the Indo-Australian archipelago. *Chelodina novaeguineae* appears to be restricted to the southern Fly River bulge from Merauke in Irian Jaya to the Gulf Province in Papua New Guinea. *Chelodina parkeri* has only been collected in the Fly River basin of Papua New Guinea. *Chelodina siebenrocki* is restricted to the tidally-influenced marshes along the coastline of the southern bulge from Merauke to the Fly River. *Elseya novaeguineae* is a wide-spread and fairly common species occurring in all low-lying areas both north and south of the Central Ranges, from the Vogelkop peninsula in the west through the Popondetta region in the Northeast and the Gulf Province in the southeast. *Emydura subglobosa* is also a fairly common species, but is restricted to the southern side of the Central Ranges, from the Kokenau area of Irian Jaya in the west to the Port Moresby region in the east. Another species of freshwater turtle occurring in the general New Guinea area but not known further east than Indonesian Halmahera is *Cuora amboinensis* (Cryptodira: Emydidae), a small, common, semi-aquatic species with moveable plastron which enables it to close into a tight box. Its vernacular name may mistakenly be used in Indonesian Irian Jaya for other freshwater species.

The following listing of vernacular names is arranged geographically, with separate sections for Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, and with each language (or representative village name) listed under its respective province. The approximate geographic location of each language (or representative village) is depicted on the map. Most of the vernacular names listed are either from our own field work, a circulated Wildlife Branch questionnaire or from the work of Summer Institute of Linguistics translators. In some cases either the entire language group or individual names were obtained from earlier literature. These cases are appropriately footnoted.

TURTLES OF THE NEW GUINEA AREA

Order Testudines

Suborder Cryptodira - Neck retracting in vertical plane.

Family Cheloniidae - Marine turtles with hard shells.

Caretta caretta (Linnaeus 1758)

Diagnosis: Five or more pairs of costal scutes, first in contact with nuchal. Three inframarginal scutes. Two pairs of prefrontal shields on head.

Chelonia mydas (Linnaeus 1758)

Diagnosis: Four pairs of costal scutes, first not in contact with nuchal. Four inframarginal scutes. One pair of prefrontal shields on head. Horny mandibular beak coarsely serrated.

Chelonia depressa (Garman 1880)

Diagnosis: as *C. mydas* but with three postocular shields instead of four, and with areas of wrinkled skin interspersed distally on fore and hind limbs, instead of being covered entirely by enlarged scales.

Eretmochelys imbricata (Linnaeus 1766)

Diagnosis: Four pairs of costal scutes. Four infra-marginal scutes, two pairs of prefrontal shields. Scutes of carapace imbricate except in very young animals. Vertibral keel. Beak prominent, narrow.

Lepidochelys olivacea (Eschscholtz 1829)

Diagnosis: Six or more pairs of costal scutes. Four enlarged inframarginal scutes, each usually with a pore near the posterior seam. Two pairs of prefrontal shields.

Family Dermochelyidae - Marine turtles with leathery shells.

Dermochelys coriacea (Linnaeus 1766)

Diagnosis: Carapace covered by smooth, scaleless black skin. Carapace with seven narrow longitudinal ridges, plastron with four ridges. Upper jaw cusped on either side.

Family Carettochelyidae - Freshwater turtles with marine type flippers and lacking carapacial scutes.

Carettochelys insculpta (Ramsay 1886)

Diagnosis: Hard, bony carapace covered by soft, pitted skin. No scutes. Forelimbs paddle-shaped with two claws. Nostrils at end of prominent, fleshy proboscis.

Family Trionychidae - Softshelled freshwater turtles.

Pelochelys bibroni (Owen 1853)

Diagnosis: Soft carapace with flexible posterior margin. No scutes. Forelimbs not paddle-shaped. Nostrils at end of small tubular proboscis.

Suborder Pleurodira - Neck retracting in horizontal plane.

Family Chelidae - Snake-necked freshwater turtles.

Chelodina novaeguineae (Boulenger 1888)

Diagnosis: Intergular scute separated from anterior plastral margin by gulars. Four claws on forelimbs. Neck long, but usually not as long as carapace. Head not flattened, dorsal neck skin with small tubercles. Carapace brown, head gray.

Chelodina parkeri (Rhodin and Mittermeier 1976)

Diagnosis: Intergular scute and forelimb claws as *C. novaeguineae*. Neck long, usually as long as carapace. Head flattened, covered by vermiculated pattern of pale lines on a dark background. Dorsal neck skin without tubercles. Carapace brown with lighter reticulations along edges.

Chelodina siebenrocki (Werner 1901)

Diagnosis: Intergular scute and forelimb claws as *C. novaeguineae*. Neck long, usually as long or longer than carapace. Head flattened, uniformly dark. Dorsal neck skin without tubercles. Carapace uniformly black or dark brown.

Elseya novaeguineae (Meyer 1874)

Diagnosis: Intergular scute not separated from anterior plastral margin by gulars. Five claws on forelimbs. Neck short, head not flattened, horny parietal shield present, jaws strong. Nuchal scute present or absent. Head without distinct yellowish temporal stripe, though often with indistinct light area lateral to horny shield. Plastron yellow, carapace keeled in juveniles.

Emydura subglobosa (Krefft 1876)

Diagnosis: Intergular scute, forelimb claws, head depth, neck length and jaws as *E. novaeguineae*. No horny parietal shield. Nuchal scute usually present. Head with distinct yellowish temporal stripe from snout through eye to tympanum. Second stripe on maxilla. Plastron red or yellow with reddish streaking along edges. Carapace never keeled.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Three main languages have wide-spread use: English is spoken by many people, Pidgin (Neo-Melanesian) is used throughout New Guinea (highlands plus north coast) and Motu mainly in Papua (south coast).

English¹⁸

loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>
flatback turtle	<i>Chelonia depressa</i>
green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
Pacific ridley	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>
leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>
pitted-shelled turtle	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
soft-shelled turtle	<i>Pelochelys bibroni</i>
New Guinea snake-necked tortoise	<i>Chelodina novaeguineae</i>
Fly basin tortoise	<i>Chelodina parkeri</i>
Torres Straits tortoise	<i>Chelodina siebenrocki</i>
yellow-striped tortoise	<i>Elseya novaeguineae</i>
red-bellied tortoise	<i>Emydura subglobosa</i>

Pidgin (Neo-Melanesian)

torasel, trausel, tarasel	marine turtle
liklik torasel, trausel	freshwater turtle

Motu

mátabudi	marine turtle
mátabudi maragi	freshwater turtle
gero	freshwater turtle
gebóre	turtleshell earrings

Bougainville Province

1. Torokina

tonesesu, taneusu
muko
purai
toitoi

Dermochelys coriacea
Chelonia mydas
Eretmochelys imbricata
marine turtle

2. Rotokas

ivoru

marine turtle

3. Nasioi

tooruai
muuko
mookono, mokono¹⁴

marine turtle
marine turtle
marine turtle

4. Tinputz

kolot

marine turtle

5. Uruava¹⁴

mokono

marine turtle

6. Torau¹⁴

mokolo

marine turtle

Central Province

7. Fishermen's Island

foakona
aao
gela
nuikali
aovuana

Dermochelys coriacea
Chelonia mydas
Eretmochelys imbricata
marine turtle
marine turtle

8. Amazon Bay

aeae

marine turtle (general)

9. Yule Island³

bono
aba

turtle (general)
turtleshell earrings

East New Britain Province

10. Tolai

pun
maia, maiiai¹⁰

marine turtle
Eretmochelys imbricata

East Sepik Province

11. Marienberg¹⁰

gusch, ngusch

Elseya novaeguineae

12. Cape Wom

songop
lat
fuon

Chelonia mydas
Dermochelys coriacea
Eretmochelys imbricata

13. Mussu Island

sanga
latuk
saki
fuon

Chelonia mydas
Dermochelys coriacea
marine turtle
Eretmochelys imbricata

14. Tarawai Island

budi
lat
sanga

Eretmochelys imbricata
Dermochelys coriacea
marine turtle

15. Bahinemo

ila ti
ti baku

freshwater turtle
marine turtle

16. Kamasau

tsurom
mopon

freshwater turtle
marine turtle

17. Yessan-Mayo

waasa
naak waasa
rirrwu

freshwater turtle
freshwater turtle
freshwater turtle

Gulf Province

18. Porome

watemu

freshwater turtle

19. Kikori River delta

uo¹⁷

Carettochelys insculpta

Madang Province

20. Long Island

kauarui
paporo
olol

Dermochelys coriacea
Chelonia mydas
Eretmochelys imbricata

21. Kalam²
yejw Freshwater turtle
22. Rawa
poonuma marine turtle
23. Dami
terib freshwater turtle
memei freshwater turtle
oni marine turtle
- Manus Province
24. Wuvulu Island
alaba *Chelonia mydas*
matani *Eretmochelys imbricata*
25. Tulu-Ponam Island
pawar *Chelonia mydas*
peleleu, boleleu *Dermochelys coriacea*
kareng *Eretmochelys imbricata*
26. Harengan Island
boibawa *Chelonia mydas*
bithiu *Dermochelys coriacea*
boiahe *Eretmochelys imbricata*
27. Ahus Island
pawar *Chelonia mydas*
puniriu *Dermochelys coriacea*
pimbat *Lepidochelys olivacea*
kareng *Eretmochelys imbricata*
28. Hermit Islands
honwanen *Chelonia mydas*
ahulam *Lepidochelys olivacea*
masang *Dermochelys coriacea*
- Milne Bay Province
29. Woodlark Islands
tadiyai *Chelonia mydas*
pava *Eretmochelys imbricata*
ponowan marine turtle

30. Esa'ala
wayo wayo marine turtle (general)
31. Muyuŵ
gonam marine turtle
32. Dobu
tameyala marine turtle
33. Yele
taake marine turtle
34. Bunama
wenu marine turtle
35. Iduna
wonu marine turtle
36. Iamalele
vonu marine turtle
37. Conflict Atoll⁹
wonu *Chelonia mydas*
- Morobe Province
38. Masele
kawadui marine turtle
rarsao marine turtle
martum marine turtle
aror marine turtle
39. Kumalu
kepogoy freshwater turtle
veli kepogoy *Elseya novaeguineae*
pus kepogoy *Elseya novaeguineae*
kandang kepogoy marine turtle
40. Azera
simimpi *Elseya novaeguineae*
narusankum large freshwater turtle

41. Suena

iwo	marine turtle
uzowo	marine turtle
nagebu	marine turtle
bauro	freshwater turtle

42. Mangga Buang

kapokahuh	freshwater turtle
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New Ireland Province

43. New Ireland

unien	marine turtle
unvikvik	marine turtle
tapisalik	marine turtle

Northern Province

44. Korafé

igho	marine turtle
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45. Miniafia

gabunam	marine turtle
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Western Province

46. Faiwol

abom	freshwater turtle (general)
matabus	freshwater turtle
fadol	freshwater turtle
dididenai	freshwater turtle

47. Bine

gamé, gamo	marine turtle
game ¹⁵	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
karara-game ¹⁵	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
bruuré, bruuro	long-necked swamp turtle (general)
uuba	short-necked river turtle (general)
bruuré, bruuro	<i>Chelodina siebenrocki</i>
busé'u uuba	<i>Chelodina novaeguineae</i>
busolamo uuba	<i>Chelodina novaeguineae</i>
ewe niiye gamé, gamo	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
hanua gamo	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
margamo	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
migimi uuba	<i>Emydura subglobosa</i>
dediri uuba	<i>Elseya novaeguineae</i>

48. Gidra

gamo	marine turtle
koa	freshwater turtle (general)

yudjkoa	<i>Emydura subglobosa</i>
koajog	<i>Elseya novaeguineae</i>
ubade	<i>Chelodina</i> spp.

49. Kiwai (Tureture - Southern coastal Kiwai)

gamo	marine turtle (general)
kararagamo	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
gamo ia	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
hiriware ¹⁵	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
diridiri pitu gamo	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>
maiwa gamo	<i>Caretta caretta</i>
anowa gamo	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
margai gamo	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>
mamuruwo gamo	? <i>Pelochelys bibroni</i>
pamowa	<i>Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya</i> spp.

50. Kiwai (Parama - Eastern coastal Kiwai)

luget	marine turtle
wabia	marine turtle

51. Kiwai (Iasa - Island Kiwai)

gamo ¹⁵	marine turtle (general)
karar ¹⁵	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
pamo ¹⁵	<i>Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya</i> spp.
auwo apuru gamo	<i>Caretta caretta</i>
pitu diridiri gamo	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>

52. Kiwai (Domori - Doumori Kiwai)¹⁵

anoa	turtle (general)
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53. Kiwai (Wabuda - Wabuda)¹⁵

gamo	marine turtle (general)
umamakabere	<i>Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya</i> spp.

54. Kiwai (Sisiame - Bamu Kiwai)¹⁵

anoa	freshwater turtle (general)
gamo	marine turtle (general)

55. Kiwai (Pirupiru - Morigi)¹⁵

gamo	marine turtle (general)
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56. Dabu (Agob)¹⁵

waru	turtle (general)
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57. Tirio¹⁵

muwa	turtle (general)
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58. Gogodara (Gogodala)¹⁵

diparo *Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya spp.*

59. Adiba¹⁵

pamoa *Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya spp.*
diparo *Chelonia mydas, Eretmochelys imbricata*

60. Waruna¹⁵

aboia *Chelodina, Emydura, Elseya spp.*

West New Britain Province

61. Arawe¹⁰

goaunam *Eretmochelys imbricata*

West Sepik Province

62. Karkar

kwipi freshwater turtle

63. Amanab

mangag freshwater turtle

64. Mianmin

maabtom freshwater turtle
maabsei freshwater turtle

Torres Strait (Queensland, Australia)

65. Mabuiag¹¹

waru^{3,7,11} turtle(general), non-mating marine turtle
maiwa *Caretta caretta*
unuwa *Eretmochelys imbricata*
saiwal, saulal mating marine turtle
surlal⁷ mating marine turtle
surlangi⁷ season of mating turtles
tupai marine turtle fat
wibad marine turtle eggs
pagasiu madu marine turtle shoulder meat
dedeal marine turtle breast bone
kunai baba marine turtle tail meat

66. Meriam¹¹

nam marine turtle
kaisu marine turtle shell
kamad mating marine turtle

IRIAN JAYA, INDONESIA

The main language is Bahasa Indonesian.

Bahasa Indonesian

- | | |
|---|--|
| penyu, penju | marine turtle (general) |
| penyu sisik | <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> |
| penyu biasa | <i>Chelonia mydas</i> |
| penyu mangong | <i>Caretta caretta</i> |
| penyu blimbing | ? <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> |
| labi-labi ^{5,12} | <i>Pelochelys bibroni</i> |
| kurakura, kurah-kurah | freshwater turtle |
| penju bulus ¹² | freshwater turtle (<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>) |
| baning ^{5,12} | freshwater turtle |
| kekuwe | freshwater turtle |
| tuturuga sisir ¹⁶ | <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> |
| 67. <u>Asmat</u> ⁶ | |
| jenam | marine turtle |
| mbu | freshwater turtle |
| paka | freshwater turtle |
| mbapet | small freshwater turtle |
| mbak | marine turtle shell |
| sop we | marine turtle collarbone |
| 68. <u>Manokwari</u> ⁴ | |
| wau kaku | <i>Chelonia mydas</i> |
| wau mis | <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> |
| marab | <i>Caretta caretta</i> |
| komep | <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> |
| kenwa | <i>Pelochelys bibroni</i> |
| 69. <u>Dema</u> ¹ | |
| baba | marine turtle |
| gaw | freshwater turtle |
| 70. <u>Berik</u> ²⁰ | |
| iwil | turtle (general) |
| 71. <u>Sobei</u> ¹⁹ | |
| arma | marine turtle |
| 72. <u>Central Sentani</u> ⁸ | |
| epeu | turtle (general) |
| 73. <u>Isirawa</u> ¹³ | |
| fona | turtle (general) |

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