



## Acute Causes Of Sea Turtle Death: Identifying Turtle In Your Soup

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One of the many threats to sea turtle populations is poaching of turtles and their eggs for consumption and sale. Here, we will address the scope of the illegal trade and introduce a new method to identify sea turtle eggs and cooked meats to the species level. Currently, fatty acid profiles that are used to identify eggs to species cannot resolve differences between loggerheads and the two ridley species. Protein-based methods can resolve all species, but can only be used for fresh meat, not eggs or cooked (or otherwise degraded) meat. In this study, we present methods to produce species-specific diagnostic restriction fragment length polymorphism patterns in the cytochrome B region of the mitochondrial DNA. This method will work on DNA of sufficient quality, regardless of the tissue of origin, and provides wildlife law enforcement another tool to combat illegal take of endangered species.

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