You're on holiday.
You're relaxed.
You've left your cares behind.

While you're on holiday, don't forget that people aren't the only animals that need warm seas and sunny beaches. Marine turtles depend on these places too and there are a few very simple things you can do to be sure you are not making their survival any harder than it already is.


© Chris Woods

Marine turtles under threat

Marine turtles have been swimming the world's oceans for millions of years. Over the last century they have been subject to massive exploitation and sadly, all species are now threatened with extinction.


© Matthew Godfrey

trade

It is illegal to take turtle products across international borders without prior permission from relevant government authorities. Trade in marine turtle eggs, meat and shells has left many populations of turtles in serious trouble.

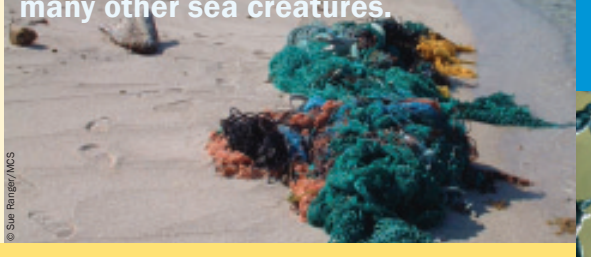

© Peter Richardson

tourism

Turtles and tourism can coexist, but sensitive planning is essential. Inappropriate, uncontrolled development and the resulting noise and light pollution is destroying turtle habitat around the world.

litter

Carlessly discarded fishing gear, plastic bags, balloons and styrofoam can float in the ocean for years and can be fatal, not only to turtles, but to many other sea creatures.


© Sue Ranger/MCS

fishing

Each year turtles accidentally get entangled in fishing gear and drown. Worldwide this accounts for hundreds of thousands of turtles.


© Stephen Mills

If marine turtles vanish, many coastal communities will have lost a way of life, as well as a valuable natural resource, and we will all have lost a treasured symbol of grace, longevity, fertility and endurance.

We would like to hear from you. If you have seen a turtle or if you have seen turtle products on sale, please complete and detach this coupon and return it to the address shown overleaf.

Name

Home contact address

Postcode
Telephone
e-mail

☐ *We would like to use the information you provide us with to enhance our knowledge of marine turtles. Please tick this box only if you do not want us to use this information.*

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

Did you see a: live turtle ☐ dead turtle ☐ turtle product for sale ☐ (*meat* ☐ *shell* ☐ *eggs* ☐) *other*

Species: green ☐ leatherback ☐ loggerhead ☐ hawksbill ☐ unknown ☐

Where did you see the turtle / turtle products on sale? (Please give the name of country and the name of the nearest town or known landmark or coordinates at sea).

Date and time:

What were you doing? fishing ☐ snorkelling ☐ sailing ☐ shopping ☐ walking on the beach ☐ scuba diving ☐ other

Would you be happy for us to contact you to find out more about what you have seen? yes ☐ no ☐

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO TURTLE CONSERVATION, PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE ORGANISATION SHOWN ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM OR CONTACT THEM DIRECTLY.

Please affix a stamp. Thank you.

marine turtle survey

Rubber stamp of the local partner's address (to be confirmed)
e.g. Anguilla National Trust
Montserrat National Trust
Turks & Caicos DECR
Bermuda Turtle Project
Cayman Islands DoE
British Virgin Islands

Thanks for your help!



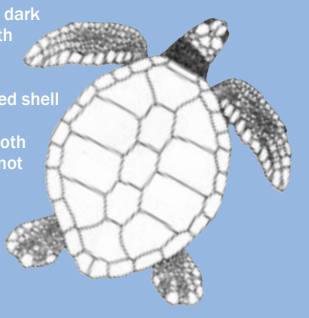
© Doug Perrine/Seapics.com

LEATHERBACK TURTLE
(*Dermochelys coriacea*)
LENGTH: up to 2.91 metres
COLOUR: black, spotted with white
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: large, up to 916 kg, pronounced longitudinal ridges on shell, which tapers to a blunt spike

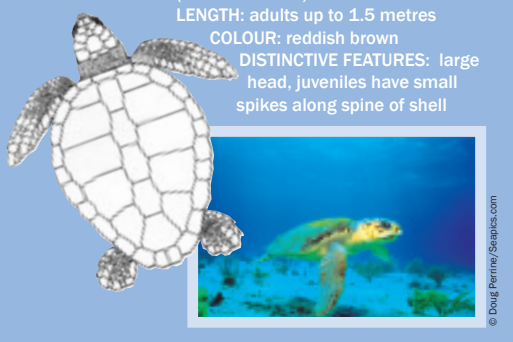


© Doug Perrine/Seapics.com

GREEN TURTLE
(*Chelonia mydas*)
LENGTH: up to 1.5 metres
COLOUR: adults dark olive or grey with dark blotches, juveniles have chestnut coloured shell
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: smooth shell, rounded (not angular) facial profile



LOGGERHEAD TURTLE
(*Caretta caretta*)
LENGTH: adults up to 1.5 metres
COLOUR: reddish brown
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: large head, juveniles have small spikes along spine of shell

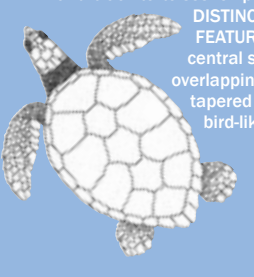


© Doug Perrine/Seapics.com



© Doug Perrine/Seapics.com

HAWKSBILL TURTLE
(Eretmochelys imbricata)
LENGTH: up to 1.2 metres
COLOUR: brown, amber and black tortoiseshell pattern
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: central shell scales overlapping, narrow tapered head with bird-like beak



This leaflet was produced by

MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY
9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire
HR9 5BU
www.mcsuk.org

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C&G Cheltenham & Gloucester

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MARINE TURTLE RESEARCH GROUP

DEFRA

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

How you can help

Never leave litter anywhere. Litter like plastic bags and food wrappers can kill turtles. Always dispose of your litter responsibly.

Let us know when you have seen a turtle using the attached coupon. We are interested in records of turtles at sea and on land. If you happen to have photographs of your turtle encounter, copies would be very useful.

Please use the attached coupon to let us know if you see live turtles or turtle products like 'tortoiseshell', turtle leather, stuffed turtles, turtle soup, meat or eggs for sale.

Turtle watching

Turtle watching is always a magical experience and you will remember it for the rest of your life. Do make the effort to go and see turtles if you can, but remember...

If you are visiting a nesting beach, ALWAYS go with an experienced guide and follow their instructions. Support local projects whenever you can, this way you can make a direct contribution to conservation.

Keep your distance - swimming turtles don't like you to get too close. A calm turtle will be quite happy for you to watch for some time - it's likely that if you move suddenly or try to touch a turtle it will swim off.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: Full list of project partners....Anguilla National Trust, Bermuda Turtle Project, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands Department of Environment, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Environment and Coastal Resources. etc...

© Front cpver photographs: Flatback turtle hatchling - Ben Osborn. Tourists watching nesting leatherback - Mathew Godfrey. Hawksbill turtle - Chris Woods

marine turtles and tourism







Working together for turtles worldwide