

RECOMMENDATIONS

to managers and policymakers

The current conservation status of Mediterranean marine turtles is based on the most updated scientific knowledge and conservation efforts: this status cannot be considered as permanent, and protection of key nesting sites throughout the region remains a priority requiring continuous attention and effort. Scientific knowledge has radically improved over recent decades. However, knowledge levels are not homogeneous, with more research efforts allocated to loggerhead turtles, some geographic areas, countries or topics, and with results that are not always comparable. Significant gaps exist from the most fundamental topics, such as the distribution of major nesting sites and total number of egg clutches laid annually in the Mediterranean, to more specific topics like age at maturity, survival rates, at-sea abundance and mortality, and behaviour.

TOP 5 RESEARCH PRIORITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN:

- Set up long-term in-water monitoring programmes in key foraging areas for assessing sea turtle abundance and trends.
- Assess distribution and level of nesting activity in all countries, with special focus in Lybia.
- Quantify bycatch (including small-scale fisheries) rates and intentional killings in associated mortality, key foraging areas and migratory pathways.
- Understand how climate change might impact sex ratios, geographical range and phenology
- Estimate/improve estimates of demographic parameters.

5 PROPOSED CONSERVATION PRIORITIES:

- Year-round protection of key feeding and wintering grounds.
- Continue current conservation methods at nesting areas threat (in situ protection, relocations, light management, etc.).
- Educate fishers about on-board sea turtle handling best practices.
- Seasonal protection of main migratory corridors.
- Test and implement bycatch mitigation approaches.

6 MAIN ACTIONS TO REDUCE THREATS:

- Eliminate intentional killing or exploitation of sea turtles and eggs



- Reduce impact of coastal development with safeguard actions (e.g. minimise photo-pollution) in nesting sites



- Control pollution originating from land and vessels; reducing at sea arrival of municipal and runoff including effluents and solid waste



- Monitor and reduce fisheries bycatch



- Estimate and reduce boats strike in important areas for marine turtles



- Develop spatial-temporal closures to fisheries of important areas for marine turtles

