

IMPROVE THE AVAILABILITY AND COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR ALL MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES TO ASSESS THE STATUS OF POPULATIONS

The IUCN Mediterranean Marine Turtle Specialist Group coordinates the compilation of quantitative information of marine turtle populations in the Mediterranean. However, regular data is only available from some countries (e.g. Greece, Turkey and Cyprus) and lacking for others.

The main breeding areas for both loggerhead and green turtles, are beaches of the Eastern basin. Information from some countries as Egypt, Libya and Syria is lacking and conditions for researchers in these countries need to improve. The most important areas for non-breeding adults, immatures and juveniles are less well-known and there is a need for further research. The conservation challenges resulting from the geopolitical complexity of the region, combined with a lack of information on some fundamental aspects of the biology of Mediterranean sea turtles have stimulated periodic conservation reviews of both breeding species. However, efforts at national and regional levels need to increase to fill gaps in data availability to adequately assess the conservation status and trends of the populations.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Marine turtle conservation on nesting beaches started in Cyprus during the early 1970s, in Greece and Turkey in the 1980s, and in Israel by the 1990s. Surprisingly, important turtle nesting sites continued to be discovered into the 2000s. For those countries in the Mediterranean that host the majority of marine turtle nestings, nest protection has been the principal conservation focus, led by local communities, non-profit groups, and volunteers. Marine turtle rescue and rehabilitation centres play an important role in environmental education and awareness. Conservation-oriented activities focusing on the marine life of sea turtles and especially on fisheries and turtle bycatch started in the 1980s. The 1980s saw also the inauguration of important national and international grassroots turtle conservation NGOs in the Mediterranean, including ARCHELON and MEDASSET as well as local associations.

Assessing beach suitability and sporadic nesting in Albania

