

OTHER SPECIES present in the Mediterranean



The Mediterranean Sea is also frequented by turtles originating from Atlantic breeding areas, including large numbers of loggerhead turtles from north American populations, some green turtles and leatherbacks. Green turtles in the waters of the Western Mediterranean, including the Spanish waters, are rare, and mitochondrial DNA analysis indicates that they occasionally occur from individuals (haplotypes) of the nesting beaches of African Atlantic populations. A limited number of leatherbacks (*Demochelys coriacea*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempi*) and hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) have been observed in the Mediterranean Sea. Leatherbacks have been recorded throughout the whole basin and are considered a regular species, although for the most part only large juveniles and adults of both sexes have been observed, and no nesting sites has been confirmed to date in the region.

The presence of both Kemp's and Olive ridleys in the Mediterranean is confirmed but rare, with only a handful of records of juvenile Kemp's in Malta, Southern Spain, France and Italy, and a single record of an Olive ridley reported in Spain. There are several records of hawksbills in the Mediterranean, but they are extremely rare. It is believed that the individuals observed in the Eastern Mediterranean originate from the Red Sea, as there are nesting beaches for this species along the coasts of Sudan and Egypt.

The softshell turtle, (*Trionyx triunguis*) is a large species of turtle frequenting freshwater and brackish habitats. The Mediterranean subpopulation is maybe encountered in coastal and estuarine waters of Southern Turkey and the Levant, and it is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of threatened species.