

## MAIN THREATS affecting marine turtles in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is a bountiful sea, but holds many dangers for marine turtles. It has a relatively small surface area (2,510,000 km<sup>2</sup>) but more than 10 million people live along its coast. It is also one of the world's largest global tourist destinations, attracting almost a third of the world's international tourists every year. Although characterized by its beautiful natural and cultural heritage and rich biodiversity, the Mediterranean is also a troubled and over-exploited sea, where marine turtles are threatened by a range of factors. Intense development, overuse of the marine and coastal zones, and agriculture are causing degradation

**Although physically and physiologically perfectly adapted to live at sea, sea turtles depend on the terrestrial environment during one of the most vital phases of their life cycle: nesting and incubation of their eggs on coastal beaches.**

of marine and terrestrial habitats, including disturbance and destruction of nesting beaches. Climate change-driven alterations

with the increase of air and seawater temperatures, sea level rise and severity of storm events are also threats impacting sea turtles in the Mediterranean. Turtles are also vulnerable to factors such as cross-continental maritime traffic, high fishing pressure, often involving practices which are hazardous to marine turtles and to marine pollution which affects the whole Mediterranean, from the beaches to the deep-sea floor.

Nonetheless, given the threats to these species, significant efforts by naturalists, the general public and administrations are needed to conserve them for future generations. The Mediterranean population of the loggerhead turtle is currently classified as "Least Concern" under the Red List (RL) criteria. This status has been achieved and maintained thanks entirely to long-term conservation efforts. Mediterranean green turtle populations have yet to be assessed.

Turtle failed crawl in Natura 2000 site in Cyprus



Hatchling lost in tyre tracks. Kyparissia Bay, Peloponnese, Greece

