



Marine turtles - even at diminished population levels - play important ecological and socio-economic roles in the Mediterranean and should be regarded by Mediterranean residents and visitors as a real biodiversity treasure. However, the future of marine turtles will be determined by our current and future actions.

The ecological values of Marine Turtles are bountiful through ensuring healthy seagrass beds and maintaining critical habitats, by providing key habitat for other marine life, balancing marine food webs, facilitating nutrient cycling from water to land and building essential ecological resilience against climate change impacts. Marine turtles also provide valuable cultural, social, and economic services to communities, stakeholders, and the tourism industry within the Mediterranean. Winning the hearts of nations and occurring every Mediterranean country, they are the perfect flagship for collaborating on Mediterranean marine conservation.

Yet, over the last 200 years, human activities have tipped the scales against the survival of marine turtles. Commercial fishing, marine bycatch, loss of nesting habitat and coastal development, poaching, the influx of ocean pollution all continue to have devastating impact on marine turtle populations. Current, and projected, impacts of climate change will impact both critical terrestrial and marine habitats through loss of nesting habitat, further skewing of sex ratios, changes in spatial habitat suitability, and biodiversity alterations, pushing these species away from recovery and toward extinction.

As marine turtle populations decline, so does their ability to fulfil vital functions in ocean ecosystems.

Despite these mounting pressures, there is still hope for Marine turtles in the Mediterranean. Loggerhead turtles have observed positive trends in populations and are currently noted as 'Least Concern' – a result of long-term conservation efforts. In addition, and despite lack of data, populations of 'endangered' green turtles are also beginning to recover in some areas. However, these trends are considered conservation dependent and thus, this is only the beginning for the successful conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean. Urgent action is needed.

Measures for the protection of marine turtles in the Mediterranean have been adopted but they have not been fully implemented. They must be actioned immediately – and they must go further. Recognising this, we, the Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Mediterranean Region, and the undersigned, are committed to the maintained conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean – ensuring a healthy ecosystem – through the following actions:

1. Advance the latest science and fill knowledge gaps, improving the availability and collection of information for all Mediterranean countries to assess the status of populations, their reproductive outputs, the health of the habitats, and the existing, and emerging, threats.



Conservation of
Marine Turtles
in the Mediterranean Region


www.medmarineturtles.org


2. Reduce local, national, and regional threats to marine turtles by challenging, minimising, and mitigating against threats through increased levels of protection, building technical capacities, and improving management effectiveness.
3. Drive, advocate and support the enforcement of existing, and future, national and international legislation for the protection, management, and recovery of marine turtles within the Mediterranean.


The future of marine turtles will be determined by our actions today. Therefore, we call on Governments, Non-Government Organisations, Global International Organisations, Regional Instruments and Businesses, to **join us** and implement immediate actions for the protection of marine turtles - protecting key biodiversity, critical habitats, and building ecological, socio-economic, and cultural resilience to the catastrophic impacts of climate change.


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