SEA TURTLE

FACTS

Seven different species of sea (or marine) turtles grace our ocean waters, from the shallow seagrass beds of the Indian Ocean, to the colorful reefs of the Coral Triangle and the sandy beaches of the Eastern Pacific. While these highly migratory species periodically come ashore to either bask or nest, sea turtles spend the bulk of their lives in the ocean. WWF's work on sea turtles focuses on five of those species: green, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, and olive ridley.

WHY THEY MATTER

Sea turtles are a fundamental link in marine ecosystems. They help maintain the health of seagrass beds and coral reefs that benefit commercially valuable species such as shrimp, lobster, and tuna. Sea turtles are the live representatives of a group of reptiles that have existed on Earth and traveled our seas for the last 100 million years. Turtles have major cultural significance and tourism value. Five of the seven species are found around the world, mainly in tropical and subtropical waters.

THREATS

Sea turtles continue to be harvested unsustainably both for human consumption and trade of their parts. Turtle meat and eggs are a source of food and income for many people around the world. Some also kill turtles for medicine and religious ceremonies. Tens of thousands of sea turtles are lost this way every year, devastating populations of already endangered greens and hawksbills.medicines or sell them whole as a high-value gift item.

Sea turtles are dependent on beaches for nesting. Uncontrolled coastal development, vehicle traffic on beaches, and other human activities have directly destroyed or disturbed sea turtle nesting beaches around the world.

PROTECTION

WWF works with local communities to reduce turtle harvesting and egg collection. Because exploitation of turtles is often driven by a lack of economic choices, we help develop alternative livelihoods so that local people are no longer dependent on turtle products for income. WWF also supports programs that promote the value of sea turtles. WWF works through TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, to stop the illegal trade of turtle shells, meat, and eggs.

WF works around the world to establish marine protected areas, ensuring sea turtles have a safe place to nest, feed, and migrate freely.

All information comes directly from the World Wildlife Fund Website

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