TO PROTECT OUR SEA TURTLES

When out of the water, sea turtles are extremely vulnerable. Stressful situations can cause them to rush back to sea without nesting. It is therefore important to follow the rules when visiting a marine turtle nesting beach.

ADVICE: DON'T DISTURB

RULES for visiting a Marine Turtle nesting beach

- Wear dark clothes
- Keep 2 meters in distance
- Guide requested
- Turn off light
- Max group size of 6
- DO NOT camp on the beach
- DO NOT run
- DO NOT handle hatchlings in the area
- DO NOT handle turtles
- DO NOT touch the turtle
- DO NOT abstract anything from the beach
- DO NOT affect or consume turtle eggs
- DO NOT disturb turtles

CARE for hatchlings: Eggs incubate above 26°C tend to develop into males, and those incubated below 26°C develop into females.

Hatchlings orientate themselves to the earth magnetic field and turn the nesting location into their inherent GPS.
Identification of sea turtles

The Guianas are known for at least three species of nesting marine turtles: the leatherback, the green turtle, and the olive ridley. The hawksbill occasionally nests in Guyana, while the logrunner is found in the waters of the Guianas, but only to forage. The leatherback and the green turtle are the most common species nesting.

Our sea turtles are threatened

The sea turtles that we encounter in the coastal waters of the Guianas are under pressure. Scientists have evaluated the status of the population of these species, and three of the five species are endangered or critically endangered. The North-West Atlantic leatherback subpopulation is evaluated as “least concern.” However, this population is being reassessed as the number of nests for the Guianas, particularly in French Guiana and Suriname fluctuates considerably from year to year, and has been decreasing since 2015 for all of the Guianas.

WWF conservation initiatives

PROTECTING TURTLES AT SEA

A major threat for sea turtles is accidentally being caught by fishing gear. WWF is supporting the development of innovative fishing gear that reduces the bycatch of sea turtles.

Since 1999, the deployment of a Turtle Excluder Device (TED) is obligatory for the Guianas fishing fleet for sea turtle protection. TEDs deploy gears in the Guianas are using TEDs. Seasonally there are also “no fishing” and “no netting” zones implemented for the artisanal fisheries in Suriname and Guyana respectively.

PROTECTING TURTLES ON LAND

WWF partners with authorities and community members or former turtle hunters to monitor and patrol the main nesting beaches during each nesting turtles nesting season. This provides a valuable long-term data set that is used to help inform management and policy decisions. WWF also promotes responsible sea turtle tourism.

A team of WWF is counting the eggs of a leatherback nest. The turtle is equipped with a satellite tracking transmitter to study the migratory patterns of the species.