

Preventing crimes against marine turtles: the role of ARCHELON

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Greece**



LIFE NATURA THEMIS
International Perspectives on Preventing Wildlife Crime
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ARCHELON Objective:

Since 1983, the primary objective of ARCHELON, the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece has been to protect the sea turtles and their habitats in Greece through monitoring and research, developing and implementing management plans, habitat restoration, raising public awareness and rehabilitating sick and injured turtles

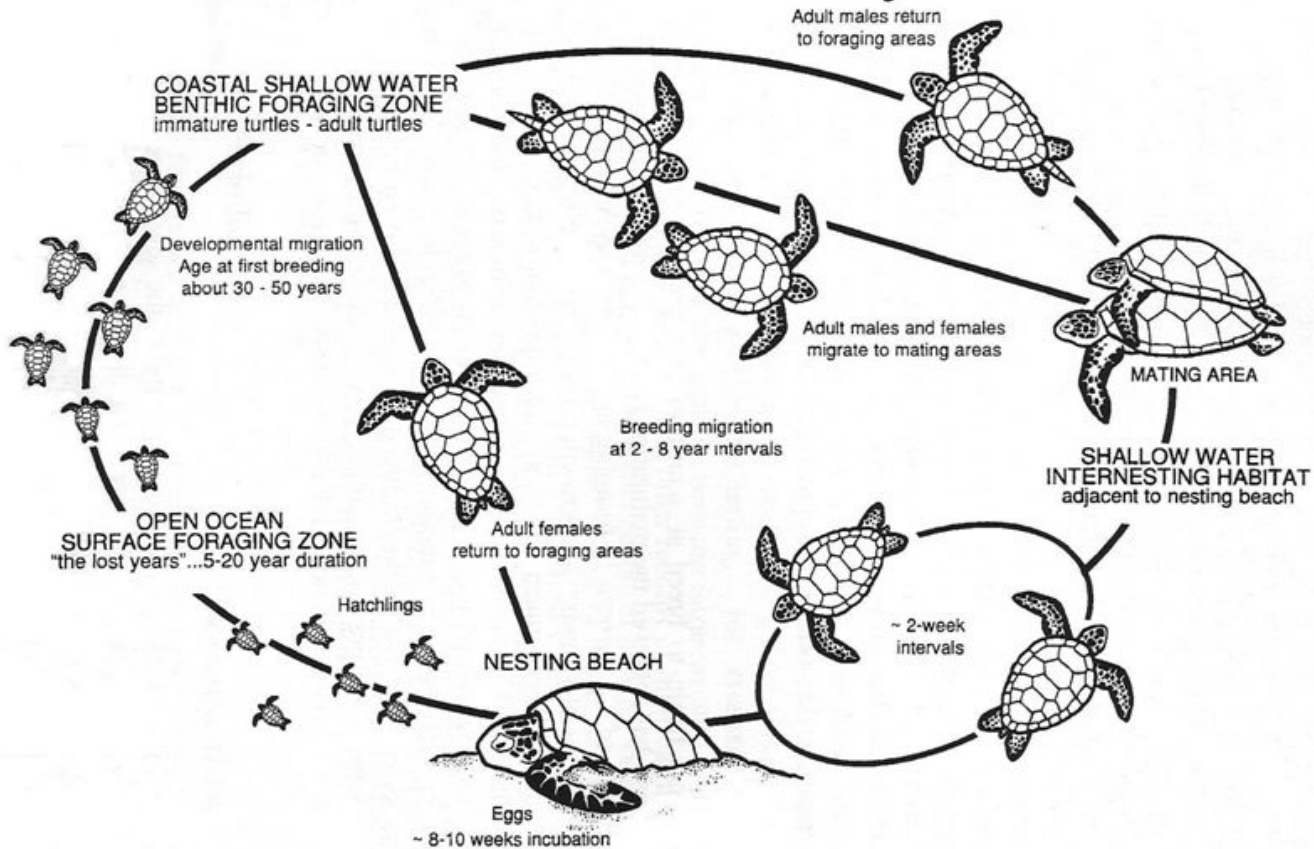


Photo: ARCHELON, Kostas Papafitsoros

Life cycle:

Marine species but closely linked to the land (lay eggs/need beaches to nest)

Generalize Sea Turtle Life Cycle



Legal protection

International:

- Washington Convention/CITES (Annex I, 1973)
- Bonn Convention (Annexes I and II, 1979)
- Bern Convention (Annex II, 1979)
- Barcelona Convention (Annex II, 1995)

European:

- Directive 92/43/EEC (Annexes II and IV)

National:

- Presidential Decree 617/1980 (FEK 163 A/18-7-1980)
- Presidential Decree 67/1981 (FEK 23 A/30-01-1981 & 43A/18.02.1981)



Photo: ARCHELON, Kostas Papafitsoros

Wildlife Crimes against sea turtles

Illegal hunting of adults and juveniles for their meat and carapace (mainly Asian and African countries).



Wildlife Crimes against sea turtles

Sea turtle meat is considered a delicacy in many countries (mainly Asian & African)



Wildlife Crimes against sea turtles

Turtle shell is used to make souvenirs (globally through trafficking)

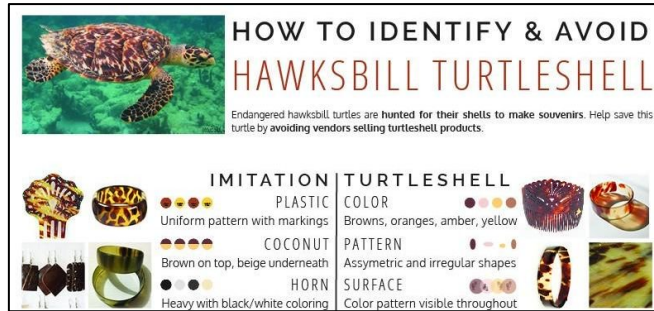


Photo: SEE TURTLE ORG



Photo: SEE TURTLE ORG

Wildlife Crimes against sea turtles

Poaching of eggs for sale in local markets as a delicacy (mainly central and south America countries)



Possible solutions?

- Campaigns for visitors (e.g. “Too rare to wear” campaign against turtle shell products)
- Create alternative ways of income for local communities (e.g. tourism, conservation)
- Guarding of sea turtle habitats



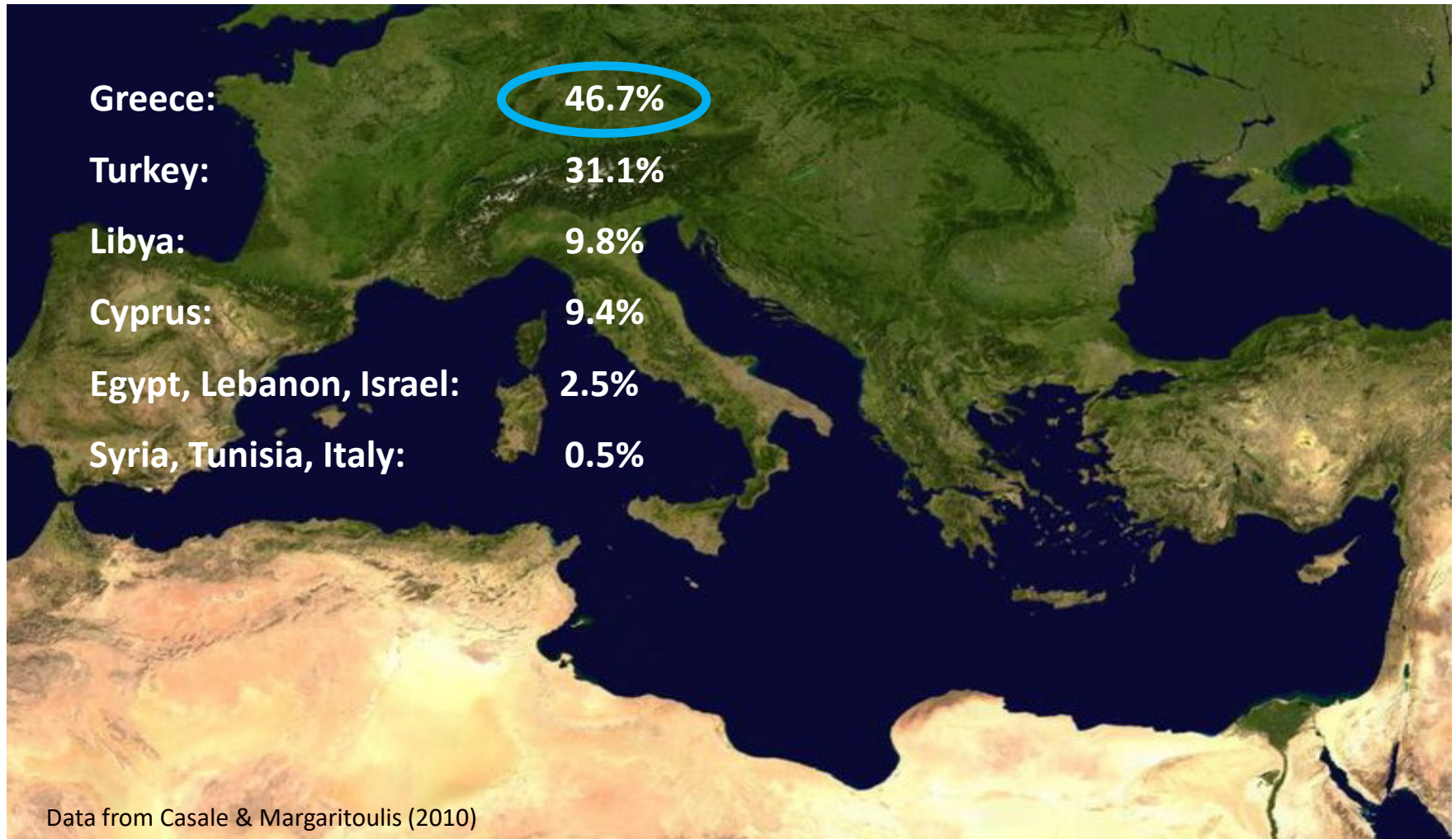
Sea turtle nesting in the Mediterranean:



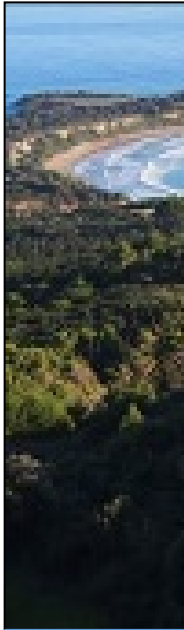
▲ Loggerhead Nesting

▲ Green Nesting

Distribution of Loggerhead nesting in the Mediterranean:



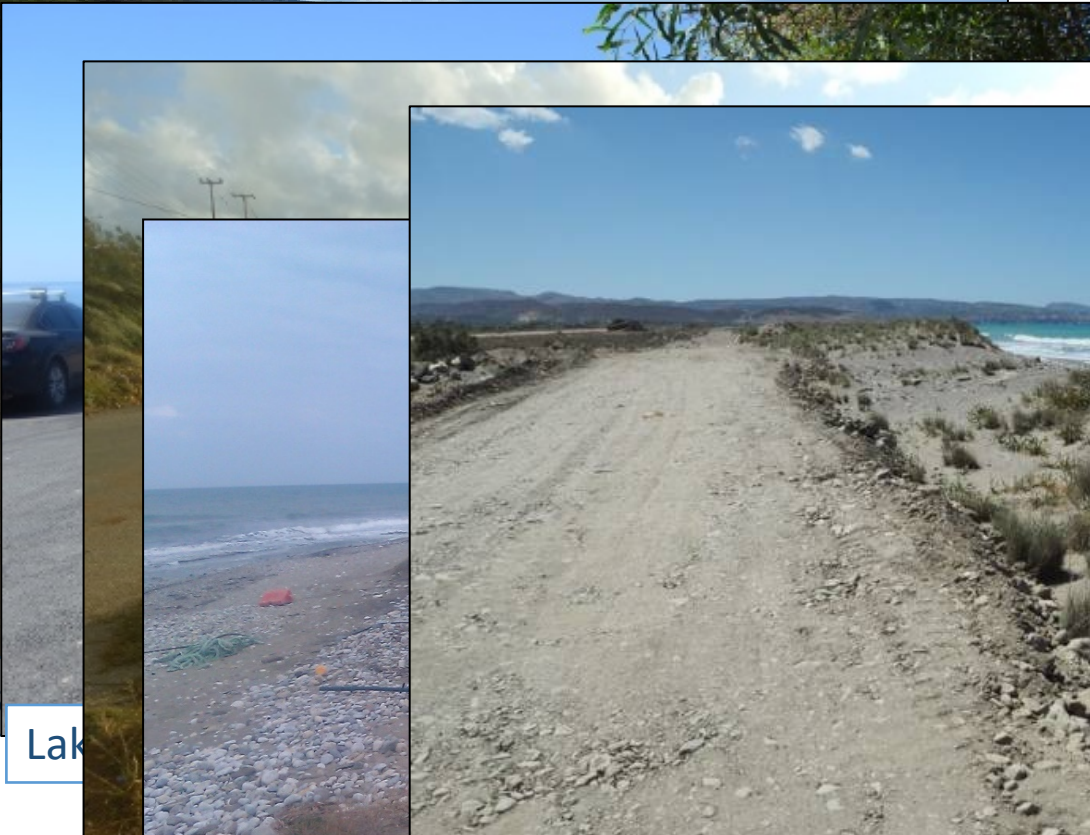
Degradation of the breeding areas (nesting beaches)



Zakynthos



Kyparissia



Lakonia



Rethymno Bay



Messara Bay

Degradation of the breeding areas (interesting marine hot spots) and feeding grounds



Obstruction of the breeding process

- Reduction of available nesting space due to beach furniture



Obstruction of the breeding process

- Hatchlings' disorientation due to light pollution



Photo: ARCHELON/Rachel Patterson



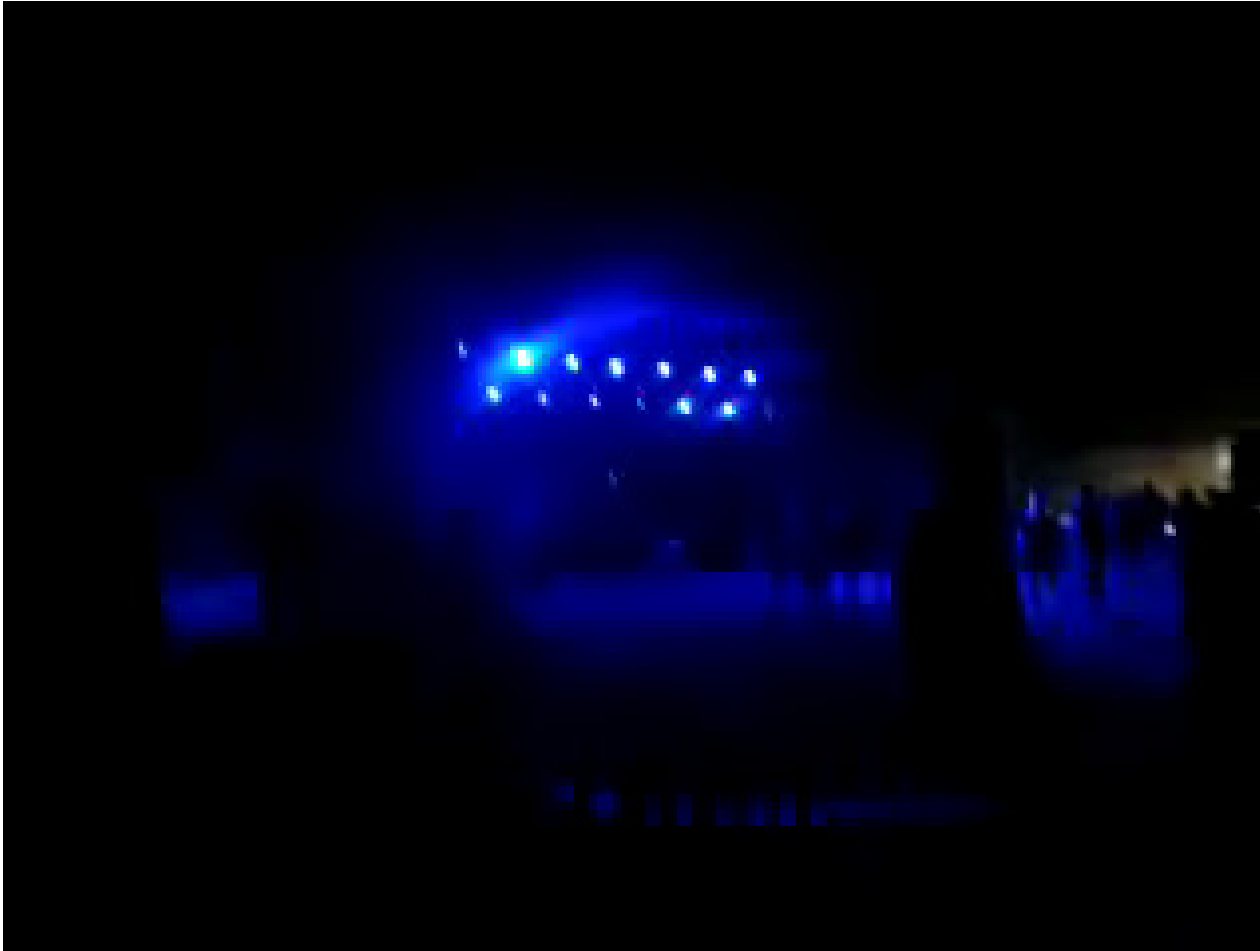
Photo: ARCHELON/Smaro Touliatou



Photo: ARCHELON/Rachel Patterson

Obstruction of the breeding process

- Beach parties (trampling of nests and hatchlings, prevention of adult females from nesting)



Obstruction of the breeding process

- Vehicles on the beach (trampling of nests, trapping of hatchlings, prevention of adult females from nesting due to sand compression)



Obstruction of the breeding process

- Speed boats at the adjacent marine area (collision with adult females)



Photo: ARCHELON/Mike Vos

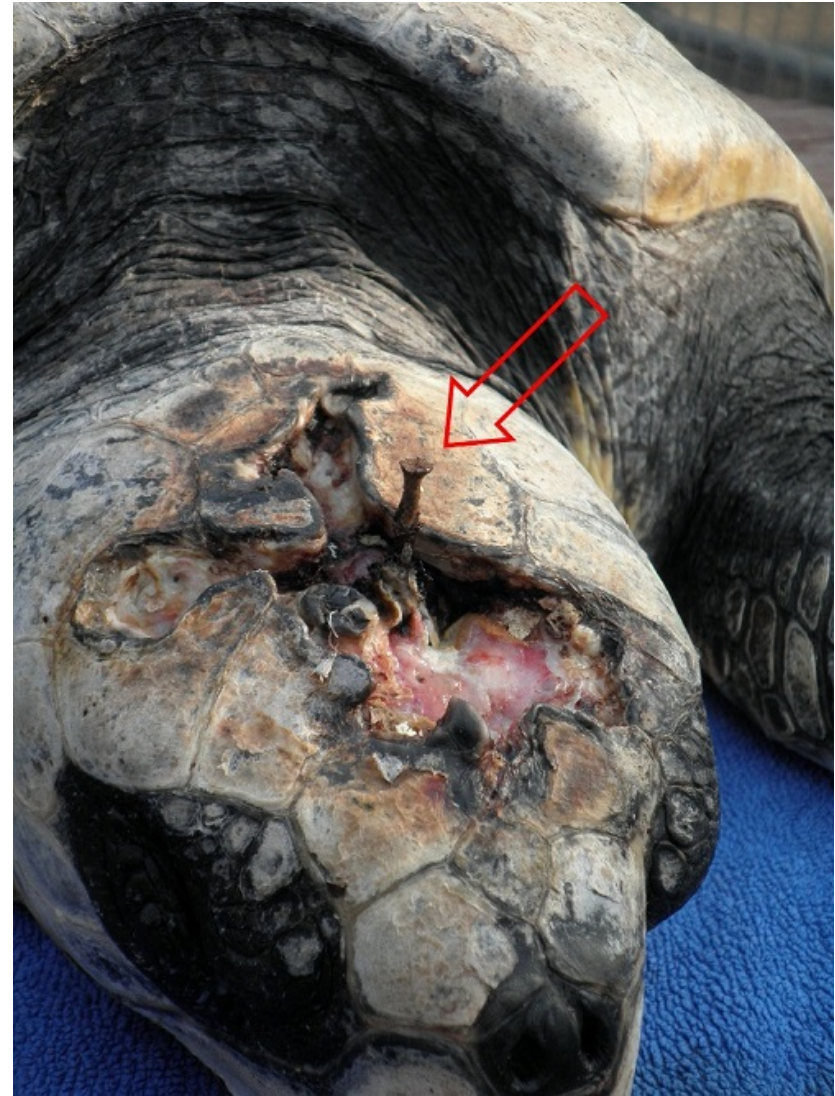
Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Nests' vandalisms



Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Intentional injuries/killings: Mykonos and Mylos cases (2 nails in the head of a male turtle)



Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Intentional injuries/killings: Naxos case (decapitation of marine turtles. 12 incidents in 2018 and 9 incidents in 2017)



Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Intentional injuries/killings: Naxos case (turtle tied to concrete to avoid detection)



Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Intentional injuries/killings: Nafplio case (extensive incision in the plastron. 5 incidents in 2016, while more dead animals were located in the area)



Deliberate damages to marine turtles

- Intentional injuries/killings: Salamina case (extensive incision in the neck. 2 incidents in 2018, while more dead animals were located in the area)



Questioning:

Although the above mentioned threats are not included in the Wildlife Crime literature, could they be considered as such when taking into consideration the special life cycle of marine turtles?



Thank you for your attention!



Photo: ARCHELON/Merlin Potter Adams

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