

EXTRA EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Turtles versus tourism: how to save a species

This is an edited version of a story from
© Greek Reporter (3/10/2024)

The Greek island of Zakynthos has become host to record numbers of surviving hatchlings of the *Caretta caretta* loggerhead turtle as the species makes an amazing resurgence.

One of the oldest living species, sea turtles are believed to have existed for more than 100 million years.

From Spain in the west to Cyprus in the east, the Mediterranean has witnessed a record rise in sea turtle nesting, thanks to the efforts of environmentalists determined to save the turtles. Until recently, they were close to extinction.

In Greece, over 10,000 new nests have been counted per year since 2023. "Now we are looking at a dramatic increase in nest numbers, the result of decades of conservation efforts," said Dr Aliko Panagopoulou of Archelon, the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece.

Thirty years ago, before the creation of a state-funded marine park on Zakynthos, Greek authorities appeared oblivious to the decline of a species whose survival is now widely recognised as vital for the

region's ecological biodiversity.

Lily Venizelos, who founded the UK-based Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (Medasset) in the 1980s, spent years pressuring Greek governments to protect *Caretta caretta* from tourism.

"I spent years when they were endangered running around different ministries with pieces of paper because back then no one cared to listen," she recalled.

The record number of tourists visiting Greece was "catastrophic," she said.

Other organisations have now been founded to protect turtles across the Mediterranean, from Turkey to Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Libya. Medasset has also expanded its education programmes for young and elderly people in schools and care homes.

But campaigners also warn against being over-confident. The climate emergency, overfishing, pollution and plastics are new dangers.

"The threats are still very much there, and it could all so easily unravel," said Nadia Andreanidou, Medasset's programmes and policy officer.



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TRUE OR FALSE?

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Human activity is causing species to go extinct at a much faster rate.



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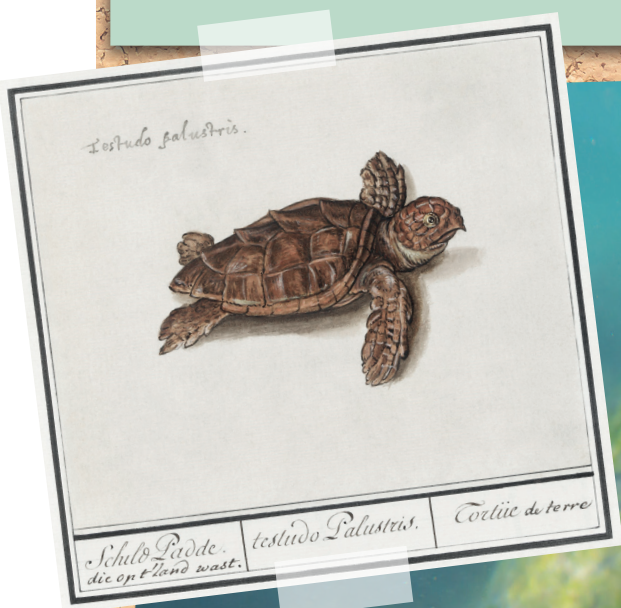
Watch [this report](#) on green turtles!



CHECK YOUR FACTS

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WHAT is the main threat to the turtles?	WHO worked together to save the turtles?	WHERE is there now a record number of hatchlings?	WHEN did Caretta caretta come into existence?	WHY did scientists think the Caretta caretta might become extinct?	HOW long have conservation efforts been going on?
ANSWER: Tourism	ANSWER: The Greek government and campaigners	ANSWER: Zakynthos	ANSWER: 100 million years ago	ANSWER: Falling numbers	ANSWER: 25 years



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