

The project also brings

INNOVATIONS TO CONSERVATION

- use of drones for monitoring of the nesting beaches;
- performance of aerial surveys to identify priority use areas;
- addition of light tags on fishing nets to mitigate by-catch;
- pilot application of a recycling waste-to-energy strategy for ghost fishing gear;
- creation of a citizen science app for smartphones to obtain observation data;
- development of GSM tracking tags using mobile phones technology to track turtle migrations.

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LIFE15 NAT/HR/000997

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Turtles
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LIFE EUROTURTLES

COLLECTIVE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING
THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF
THE EU SEA TURTLE POPULATIONS



SEA TURTLES play a crucial role in the marine ecosystems of the world. Within the European Union, loggerhead and green turtles are strictly protected species.

During their life cycle, sea turtles use the vast area of the Mediterranean Sea to nest, mate, grow up, feed and overwinter. The warm beaches of the Eastern Mediterranean concentrate the nesting beaches of both species. Europe's largest continental shelf area, the northern Adriatic, is one of the most important feeding and overwintering areas for loggerhead turtles. At the same time, sea turtles face numerous threats – destruction of nests, marine pollution, by-catch in fisheries and entanglement in ghost gear. Hence, for such a migratory species effective conservation requires coordinated actions throughout their range.



LIFE EuroTurtles is a collaborative project that involves nine partners from six EU countries aimed at improving the conservation status of loggerhead and green turtles in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea.

This five year 5.1 million Euro project is 75% co-funded by the *LIFE financial instrument of the European Union supporting environmental and nature conservation projects* - ec.europa.eu/life

START DATE: 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016

END DATE: 31ST AUGUST 2021

THE PROJECT AIMS TO

- 1/ Reduce the impact of anthropogenic threats at nesting sites;
- 2/ Reduce fishery-related threats at foraging grounds;
- 3/ Extend the marine Natura 2000 network for sea turtles in some countries;
- 4/ Develop a common approach for sea turtles conservation in the EU;
- 5/ Contribute to fulfillment of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive by developing common methods and providing baseline data for monitoring;
- 6/ Promote sea turtles as a common and shared natural heritage of all EU citizens;
- 7/ Set up a network of relevant stakeholders for sea turtle conservation.

ACTIONS INCLUDE

- a/ protecting nests and the use of drones for early-detection;
- b/ reducing the impact of fishing by,
 - providing fishermen with tools and knowledge to reduce the mortality of by caught turtles;
 - removing ghost gear from the sea floor;
 - providing information about turtle hot-spots derived from reports, aerial surveys and remote tracking of turtles;



- c/ improving the capacity of rescue networks to recover and treat injured turtles;
- d/ creating or expanding Natura 2000 sites (HR, IT) to include turtle hot-spot areas, in cooperation with the competent authorities;
- e/ promoting regulations at nesting sites in order to reduce habitat loss and disturbance to nesting and incubation;
- f/ raising of public awareness – through dedicated web and social media, education kits, public events, lectures, citizen science app for smart devices etc.;
- g/ improving cooperation among beneficiaries, other conservation organizations and competent authorities.