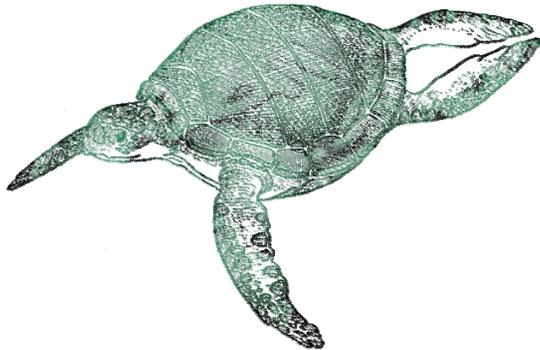


The Loggerhead Turtle

(*Caretta caretta*)



The Loggerhead Turtle is reddish-brown in colour with a large head. Its maximum shell length is 1.1 meters and it can weigh up to 180Kg. It has a powerful jaw. It swims in the open sea but is also found in coastal feeding grounds including coral reefs. The Loggerhead Turtle feeds on heavy-shelled clams, crustaceans and encrusting organisms attached to rocks and reefs. It lives in deep waters where food-bearing currents are located.



Sea turtles are global travellers who nest in one country and feed in another. Jamaicans need to be part of the global effort to protect sea turtles both young and old as somewhere in another country someone is protecting our turtles.

For more information on Jamaica's Protected Species and the laws protecting them contact:

The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)
10 & 11 Caledonia Avenue,
Kingston 5

Telephone:
754-7540

Fax:
754-7595/6

Email:
pubed@nepa.gov.jm

Toll free:
1-888-991-5005

Website:
www.nepa.gov.jm



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Managing & protecting
Jamaica's land, wood & water

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THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AGENCY

Jamaica's Protected Species

Learn About
Our Marine Animals



Corals



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Hawksbill Turtle

Corals

Corals are living organisms. They exist as a picturesque underwater garden populated by a variety of colourful spiny, leaf-like, rocklike or shrublike structures. Coral reefs are considered the forest of the sea and occur in warm, clear and unpolluted coastal tropical waters of the world. The Caribbean accounts for about 20% of the world's coral reefs.

Corals feed on minute marine organisms and depend on the algae within their tissues to absorb sunlight and generate energy through photosynthesis. Land and marine based pollution are major threats to the survival of corals. These pollutants include; solid waste, effluent from ships, hotels, homes and other foreign objects transported by gullies, rivers and humans.

Corals/coral reefs provide food and shelter for a variety of fish, crabs, lobsters, sea turtles and several other marine creatures. Coral reefs aid in the generation of white sand and protect coastal settlements and beaches from direct battering from storm and hurricane waves.

Two species of coral that have been listed as endangered are the Staghorn and Elkhorn corals.



Hawksbill Turtle

(*Eretmochelys imbricata*)



The Hawksbill Turtle has a very attractive coloured shell with thick overlapping scales. The shell is streaked and mottled with brown, orange, black, yellow and/or red. The shell may be up to 1 metre long and weighs up to 90Kg. This turtle is the most tropical of all the marine turtles and is usually found in coastal reefs and bays. Sand mining and coastal zone developments degrade nesting and foraging habitats. The bill of the Hawksbill Turtle assists in feeding in coral reef habitats where it feeds mostly on sponges. It is illegally harvested for its meat, eggs and shell and drowns when caught in shrimp trawls and other nets. The meat of this turtle is toxic and may cause coma or death.

Leatherback turtle

(*Dermochelys coriacea*)



The Leatherback Turtle is the largest of the marine turtles. It lacks a bony shell but is covered with a firm,

rubbery skin with seven longitudinal ridges. The skin is brownish-black and covered with white, pink or blue splotches. The range in shell length is 1.3-2.7m (9ft.) and it weighs up to 900Kg. It is the largest and most pelagic (open water) of all the sea turtles. It prefers deep waters up to 36 metres (120ft deep). The leatherback turtle feeds mainly on jelly-fish. It is illegally harvested for its meat, oil, leather, eggs and shell. It is a very powerful swimmer and deep diver and fishermen accidentally capture them.

Green Turtle

(*Chelonia mydas*)



The Green Turtle is brown olive in colour and has a shell length of up to 76-91cm and can weigh up to 400Kg. It sleeps on the reef and is found in comparatively shallow waters inside coral reefs, and lagoons where its food, sea grass and algae (seaweeds) are located. The numbers of Green Turtle have declined because of over harvesting for its meat and accidental capture in shrimp nets. This turtle gets its name from the colour of its fat, which is green-olive and the sea grass it feeds on. Feeding and breeding grounds may be separated by 100's or 1000's of kilometres.