MARINE TURTLE IDENTIFICATION CARDS
for Indian Ocean fisheries
Mean length: 90 cm
Mean weight: 70 kg
Colour: grey to olive-green carapace; underside of flippers and tail yellow or cream colour.
Diet: sea cucumbers, crustaceans and other invertebrates.
Status: IUCN: Data Deficient, CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited)

FR: tortue à dos plat
ESP: tortuga plana de Australia
**Flatback turtle**
*(Natator depressus)*

Carapace:
4 pairs of costal scutes, the first pair is not in contact with the nuchal scute; slightly upturned lateral margins.

Max length: 100 cm
Max weight: 85 kg
Mean length: 100 cm
Mean weight: 110 kg
Colour: reddish-brown to orange-brown carapace.
Diet: crustaceans, molluscs, fish and echinoderms.
Status: IUCN: Endangered, CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited).

FR: tortue caouanne
ESP: caguama
Loggerhead turtle
(Caretta caretta)

Carapace:
5 pairs of costal scutes, the first pair is in contact with the nuchal scute.

5 prefrontal scales
large head

Max length: 110 cm
Max weight: 150 kg
Mean length: 90 cm
Mean weight: 60 kg
Colour: reddish-brown to orange carapace with dark brown to black markings; darkish head scales and flippers, separated by light-colour bands; undersides of flippers and tail very pale yellow.
Diet: soft coral, sponges, crustaceans and cephalopods.
Status: IUCN: Critically Endangered; CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited).

FR: tortue imbriquée
ESP: tortuga de Carey
Hawksbill turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata)

- 2 pairs of prefrontal scales
- Pointed hooked beak
- Max length: 100 cm
- Max weight: 120 kg

Carapace:
- 4 pairs of costal scutes, the first pair is not in contact with the nuchal scute; carapace scutes are generally overlapping but this trait fades with age.
Mean length: 170 cm
Mean weight: 450 kg (record at 918 kg)
Colour: back (pseudocarapace) and entire body: deep bluish-black with white spots. This animal does not have any scales.
Diet: mainly jellyfish but also molluscs, seaweed or plants.
Status: IUCN: Critically Endangered ; CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited)

FR: tortue luth
ESP: tortuga laud

Photo: Vincent Liardet
Leatherback turtle
(Dermochelys coriacea)

Max length: 220 cm
Max weight: 920 kg

Back (pseudocarapace): no scales (simply covered by a kind of leather) and divided by seven longitudinal ridges.

No scales on head
Mean length: 70 cm
Mean weight: 45 kg
Colour: carapace and underside of flippers green to dark brownish-green; top of flippers and neck greyish-green. Carapace almost as large as long.
Diet: crustaceans, molluscs, jellyfish, less frequently seaweed and plants.
Status: IUCN: Vulnerable; CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited)

FR: tortue olivâtre
ESP: tortuga golfina

Photo: Dr Colin Limpus
Olive ridley turtle

*(Lepidochelys olivacea)*

- Carapace:
  - 5 or more pairs of costal scutes (not necessarily the same number on either side), the first pair is in contact with the nuchal scute.

- 2 pairs of prefrontal scales

Max length: 75 cm
Max weight: 80 kg
Mean length: 110 cm
Mean weight: 145 kg
Colour: olive-green carapace with black spots in adults (> 90 cm); brick red with a few streaks in sub-adults (15–90 cm); bluish-black with a white edge bordering the carapace and flippers at birth.
Diet: adults: herbivores; juveniles: mainly carnivores (small crustaceans, molluscs and other invertebrates).
Status: IUCN: Endangered; CITES: Appendix I (international trade and transport prohibited)

FR: tortue verte  ESP: tortuga verde
Green turtle
(Chelonia mydas)

1 pair of prefrontal scales

Max length: 120 cm
Max weight: 250 kg

Carapace:
4 pairs of costal scutes, the first pair is not in contact with the nuchal scute.
Releasing hooked turtles

If a turtle is caught, the following steps should be taken to give it the best possible chance of survival:

A. Assess the turtle's size,
   - if large, release it or entangle it using cutter and gaff to cut tangled lines
   - if small, bring it on board with dip net

B. Place a piece of wood in the turtle's mouth so it cannot bite,
   - if hook is visible, cut off barb and remove hook, or use de-hooker to remove hook
   - if hook is not visible, cut line close to mouth

C. Assess the condition of the turtle before releasing it: depending on how lively it is, keep it on board for a minimum of 4 hours, and up to 24 hours
   - Raise rear flippers 20 cm off deck to drain water from lungs
   - Place turtle in shaded location, covered with wet towels

D. Identify the turtle's species name then carefully return it to the water

E. Record the interaction on your logbook and inform your fisheries department
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marine Turtle</th>
<th>Asian Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flatback turtle</td>
<td>Flatack turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green turtle</td>
<td>Green turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawksbill turtle</td>
<td>Hawksbill turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leatherback turtle</td>
<td>Leatherback turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive ridley</td>
<td>Olive ridley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic ridley</td>
<td>Atlantic ridley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Penyu punggung</th>
<th>Penyu hijau</th>
<th>Penyu sisik</th>
<th>Penyu beilming</th>
<th>Penyu keraja bear</th>
<th>Penyu lumpur</th>
<th>Penyu kakakta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green turtle</td>
<td>パラオヤミガメ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawksbill turtle</td>
<td>パラオヤミガメ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leatherback turtle</td>
<td>パラオヤミガメ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive ridley</td>
<td>パラオヤミガメ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
<td>タイマイ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marine Turtles are Endangered Species

Ecology:

- Marine turtles have inhabited the oceans for over 100 million years.
- Six of the seven recognised species of marine turtles can be found in the Indian Ocean.
- After spending decades at sea, females return to the beach near to where they were born to lay many dozens of eggs in 3 to 4 successive "crawls".
- Hatchlings break out of the nest chamber and enter the sea after 45 - 90 days of incubation, depending on the species.
- Only one out of a thousand hatchlings will reach adulthood. The very high natural mortality rate makes the conservation of every individual encountered at sea important.
- At sea, turtles have a varied diet, depending on the species, which may include jellyfish, seagrass, sponges, coral, invertebrates and fish.

Threats to marine turtles:

- Accidental death in commercial fishing gear, including gillnets, surface longlines and drifting FADs.
- Swallowing deadly waste, including plastics, polystyrene, cigarette filters, etc...
- Illegal poaching for meat, eggs and shell.
- Degradation and loss of nesting habitat due to development.
Play a Part in their Conservation!

If you are on a commercial fishing vessel:

- Follow expert advice to reduce accidental capture of marine turtles.
- If you do capture a marine turtle accidentally, use the best techniques to increase its chance of survival once returned to the sea.
- Use these cards to identify the turtle species, record the capture in your logbook and notify your fisheries authority in order to assist in important data collection exercises.
- Check for any tags on the turtles’ flippers. Record the tag number, date and location of capture. If possible, take a photograph of the animal before release and send the information to the address shown on the tag.

If you are on a nesting site:

- Do not disturb adult turtles as they come ashore to lay eggs. Stay in the distance and do not shine lights on them. Otherwise, they may abort their nesting attempt. If you wish to take a photograph, do so without flash only after the animal has begun laying eggs.
- Do not touch the turtles or their eggs.
- If you see turtle hatchlings on the beach, do not handle them as they move towards the sea.
- Keep dogs away, as they are potential predators.
International and national conservation measures:

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) strictly regulates international trade in any of the seven species of marine turtles.
- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its Indian Ocean Marine Turtle MoU (IOSEA) require member countries to put in place domestic conservation measures and to cooperate in common conservation programmes.
- Many countries also prohibit turtles from being hunted and sold or consumed locally, through their regulations.

IOTC Requirements Regarding Marine Turtles

The following are among the actions that fishers/observers are expected to take in relation to marine turtles, in line with IOTC Conservation and Management Measures.

- Observers/fishers should record any interaction with a marine turtle noting the species involved, the date and location and report to the flag state authority.
- Observers/fishers should take all the necessary steps to release the turtle alive and in good condition.
- On longliner, observers/fishers should ensure that a line-cutter and a de-hooker are available onboard.
- Purse-seine vessels shall avoid encirclement of marine turtles and are encouraged to adopt FAD designs which reduce entanglement of marine turtles.

For more information on marine turtles:

- IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU: www.ioseaturtles.org
- KELONIA observatory of marine turtles: www.kelonia.org
- IUCN: www.iucnredlist.org / www.iucn-mtsg.org
**MARINE TURTLE IDENTIFICATION KEY**

- **Carapace**
  - no scute
  - 5 distinct ridges
  - No claw

**Carapace**
- large scutes
- no continuous ridge
- Claws on flippers

- **Dermochelys coriacea**
  - (Leatherback turtle)
  - (Tortue luth)

- **Caretta caretta**
  - (Loggerhead turtle)
  - (Tortue caouanne)

- **Lepidochelys olivacea**
  - (Olive ridley turtle)
  - (Tortue olivâtre)

- **Eretmochelys imbricata**
  - (Hawksbill turtle)
  - (Tortue imbriquée)

- **Chelonia mydas**
  - (Green turtle)
  - (Tortue verte)

**Carapace**
- 4 pairs of costal scutes

**Carapace**
- 5 pairs of costal scutes
  - angular carapace with truncated back
  - colour red brown to brown

**Carapace**
- 6 pairs of costal scutes
  - carapace +/- circular
  - colour grey green

**Carapace**
- 2 pairs of prefrontal scales
  - Overlapping scutes
  - 2 claws on each flipper

**Carapace**
- 1 pair of prefrontal scales
  - No overlapping scutes
  - 1 claw on each flipper
These turtle identification cards are produced as part of a series of awareness materials developed by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in order to improve the reporting of interactions between vessels targeting species under the management mandate of IOTC and marine turtles.

This publication was made possible through financial assistance provided by IOTC.

For further information, contact:

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Le Chantier Mall
PO Box 1011, Victoria, SEYCHELLES
Phone: +248.422.54.94 Fax: +248.422.43.64
Email: secretariat@iotc.org Website: http://www.iotc.org

Acknowledgements: we gratefully acknowledge contributions from the Secretariat of the IOSEA MoU, IFREMER and KELONIA for the development of these marine turtle identification cards.

Graphics and layout: Jipé Le-Bars.
IOTC version: Julien Million

©FAO and SPC, 2018
I8916EN/1/03.18