

SEA TURTLES IDENTIFICATION

Why? - Sea turtles are endangered

There are only seven species of Sea turtles, and they are all in danger of getting extinct. They grow slow and their nesting habitats are being destroyed or disturbed in many places.

How can you help?

There are two species you are likely to encounter - the Hawksbill turtle and the Green turtle. It is not known how much they move about in the Red Sea region. Thus the idea is to use your photos to get more knowledge.

3 easy steps

#1 Get photos of the sides of the head

Try to get high quality photos of the scales on each side of the head. And preferably also the top of the head.

#2 Take photos around the animal

Try to get a photo of both sides of the head, top of the head, the tail and the flippers.

#3 Upload your photos and information

Upload your photo with details of date, location (preferably georeferenced), and depth. Any other characteristics about the animal you have seen?



<http://redseasnorkeling.com/sea-turtle-observations/>

Do you want to determine:

- if it is a Hawksbill or Green turtle?
- if it is a male or a female?
- if you can identify the individual? see next page ...

You can help!



What we do

Based on your photos we will try to identify each individual turtle. And if we already have it in our database we get information about its movements. So, we not only interested in getting new turtles into the database, but information about known individuals. So if you think you see the same turtle again one week or two later - then please make a new set of photos and send it to us.

Take photos from all angles

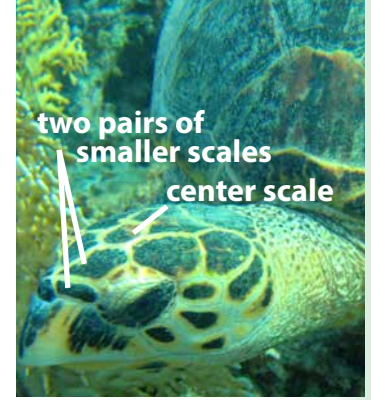
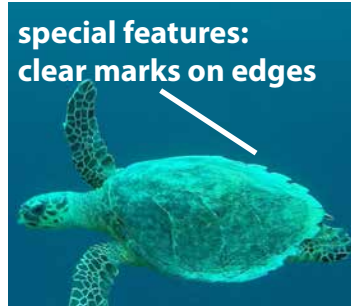
Get close and try to get photos (or video) all around the turtle, so it gets easier to establish the sex and any unique marks of the turtle.

- BUT go slow and keep a distance to avoid disturbing or scaring the animal away!

Depending on its behaviour it may be ok to get really close - keep 1-1.5 meters distance - however do never touch the animal - though it can be tempting!

Do not use flash-light as it also disturbs the animal.





Green turtle
Chelonia mydas

You can meet the huge Green turtle in Marsa Alam area - especially in Marsa Abu Dabbab. It can grow to 150 cm and 300 kg! Listed as Endangered (EN) by IUCN.

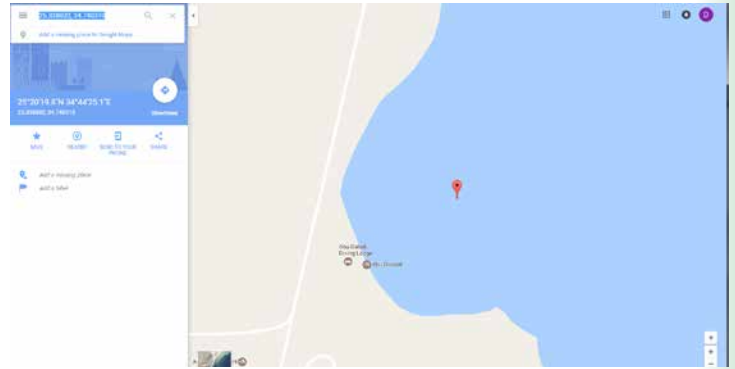
Hawksbill turtle
Eretmochelys imbricata

The hawksbill turtle can grow up to 1 m and weighing 80 kg. But you are more likely to encounter much smaller individuals in the Marsa Alam area. It is considered Critically Endangered (CR) by IUCN.

Special unique features are important

If the individual has any kind of special marks or e.g. missing a flipper, etc. it is important to note. And if it has a tag getting a photo where it is possible to see its number would be great.

The observations are only really helpful if you are very precise in marking the observation area and get the georeferencing correct. We suggest that you use Google Maps, zoom into the area, place the marker and copy the latitude and longitude (the long number series).



IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS

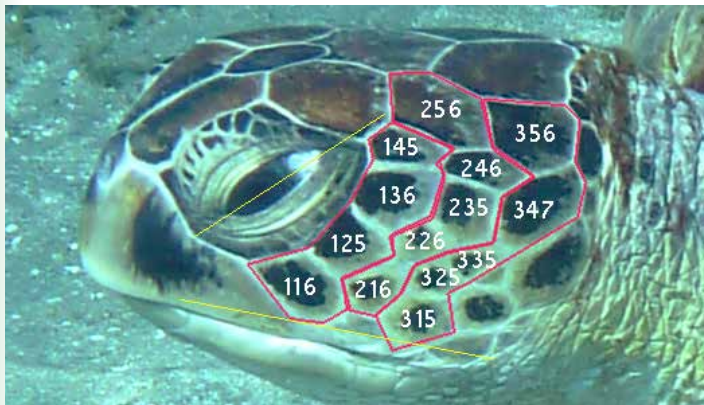


Photo ID code for the turtle above:
4-116-125-136-145-216-226-235-246-256-315-325-335-347-356-101-013

At the end, two codes composed of two series of 3-digit codes define the identity of one individual, that can be looked up in a database.

It is possible to identify the single individuals using a combination of data. Most importantly the scales on the head. If you want to try yourself, then here is the method (but we are happy if you just send us your photos and information on when and where the photos are taken).

The first single digit of the code profile represents the number of scales located behind the eye, in the first row.

3-digit codes represent each scale posterior to the eye:

The first number of the 3-digit code corresponds to the row number.

The second number corresponds to the position of the scale in that row.

The third one corresponds to the number of sides of the scale. - i.e. how many scales are next to it.