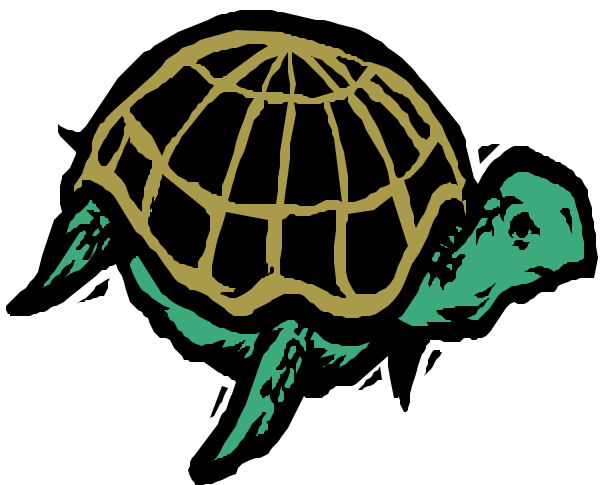


The Hawksbill Turtle has a very attractive coloured shell with thick overlapping scales. The shell is streaked and mottled with brown, orange, black, yellow and/or red. The shell is 1 metre and weighs up to 80 kg. This turtle is the most tropical of all the marine turtles and is usually found in coastal reefs and bays. The bill of the Hawksbill Turtle assists in feeding in coral reef habitats. It feeds mostly on sponges. It is over harvested for its meat, eggs and shell and drowns when caught in shrimp trawls and other nets. Sand mining and coastal zone development degrade nesting and foraging habitats.



Sea turtles are global travelers who nest in one country and feed in another. Jamaica needs to be part of the global effort to protect sea turtles. Protect 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 Biodiversity Branch
The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)**

Telephone
754-7540

Fax:
754-7595/6

Email:
pubed@nepa.gov.jm

Hotline:
1-888-991-5005

Website:
[Http://www.nepa.gov.jm](http://www.nepa.gov.jm)



Create an Environment
for Clean Living

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Managing & protecting Jamaica's land, wood & water

**THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
AND PLANNING AGENCY**

Jamaica's Protected Species

Learn About Our Water Animals



Corals



Loggerhead Turtle

Why Are Corals Protected?

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, tropical, clear and unpolluted coastal tropical waters of the world. They rest on the sea floor of marine shelves. The Caribbean accounts for about 20% of the world's occurrence of corals.

Corals feed on minute marine organisms and depend on the algae within their tissues to absorb sunlight and generate energy by the process of photosynthesis. Land and marine based pollution are major threats to the survival of corals. Other pollutants are; effluents from ships, hotels, domestic waste and other foreign bodies transported by gullies, rivers and us humans.

Corals/coral reefs provide food and shelter for a variety of fish, crabs, lobsters, 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.



The Loggerhead Turtle

The Loggerhead Turtle is reddish-brown in colour with a large head. Its maximum shell length is 1.2 m and it can weigh up to 180 kg. It has a powerful jaw. It swims in the open sea but is also found in coastal feeding grounds including coral reefs and nests further than the tropics than any other marine turtle. The logger head turtle feeds on heavy-shelled clams, crustaceans and encrusting attached to rocks and reefs. It is over harvested for its meat and accidental capture by shrimp trawlers and other nets. It lives in deep waters where food-bearing currents are located.

Leatherback turtle



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 covered with black and white blotches. Its maximum shell length is 130 –165cm (6ft.) and it weighs up to 500 kg. It is the largest and most aquatic (pelagic) of all the sea turtles. It prefers deep waters up to 36 metres (120 ft deep). The leatherback turtle feeds mainly on jelly-fish. It is over harvested for its meat, oil, leather, eggs and shell and fishermen accidentally capture it. It is a very powerful swimmer and deep diver.

Green Sea Turtle



The Green Turtle is brown olive in colour and has a shell length of up to 1.20 m and can weigh up to 230 kg. It is found in comparatively shallow waters inside coral reefs, shallow water and lagoons where sea grass and algae (seaweeds) are located. It sleeps on the reef. It is a herbivore and feeds on sea grass and algae. 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 are separated by 100's or 1000's of kilometres.

Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

