

Night Patrol

If you encounter a turtle coming out of the water, you must stop and follow it in the dark silently.

If turtles are disturbed before they start nesting they will be frightened and will quick return to the sea

It is preferable to walk on the beach alone or in two and communicate with the rest of the group by smartphone (without ringtone!!)

It is recommended to follow the surf-line while looking for tracks

Emerging turtles leave tracks that start from the surf-swept strip of that night

Tracks from previous night do not usually start from this strip but higher up, as tides and waves cover up the lower tracks

Once a turtle has been located, watch her to ascertain at what stage of nesting she is at. Following the track to find a turtle you must stay behind her

To avoid disturbing the turtles, it is safer to crawl on all fours

White or black clothes should be avoided as they can more easily be detected by nesting turtle which are on the lookout for any moving object

Equipment:

Wallet in which you put: a tape measure, a pen, notebook and tagging-gun and tags

A red filter torch is indispensable. Large torch may be used near the ground to detect tracks, only when necessary

To remember

Caretta caretta Loggerhead turtle 90-100 cm- Curved Carapace Length

Five Costal scutes

Chelonia mydas: Green turtle 110 cm or so. Curved Carapace Length

Four Costal scutes

Key to identification of Hatchlings

Chelonia mydas: Forelimbs outlined in white; head scales blackish with narrow light whitish border; plastron pure white; typical carapace length (SCL) 47 mm.

Caretta caretta: coastal scutes five pairs. Carapace length 41mm

Tracks

Loggerheads leave tracks where the deep impressions of the front flippers are alternate (Asymmetrical tracks).

Green turtles leave parallel impressions (Symmetrical tracks).

Nests

Loggerheads dig little or no body pit. The top layer of eggs is usually 20-35 cm below the surface of the sand while the bottom of the egg-chamber is about 35-55 cm deep.

Distance from the sea 2,5-4 m

Green turtle leaves conspicuous body pits. The nest is wide and deep. The top layer of eggs is 45-60 cm below the surface of the sand while the bottom of egg-chamber may be 60-85 cm deep.

Distance from the sea 5-10 m.