

**NOMENCLATURE**

*Eretmochelys imbricata* (Latin scientific name) Family Cheloniidae  
Carey de Concha (Spanish, Puerto Rico)  
Hawksbill Sea Turtle (English)  
Tortue verte (French)  
Tartaruga de Pente (Portuguese, Brazil)

**MORPHOMETRICS**

Max Size: 90 cm straight carapace length (SCL)  
Max Weight: 80 kg  
Sexual Dimorphism in adults: Males have long tails, while females tails remain short and under the shell.

**RANGE**

Distribution: Worldwide tropical and subtropical oceans  
Nesting Distribution: Tropical mainland and island beaches of Atlantic, Pacific & Indian Oceans and, Red Sea. Frequently nest under overhanging vegetation (either *Suriana maritima*, *Conocarpus erectus* or *Coccoloba uvifera*).  
Foraging Habitat: Coral reef and associated ecosystems surrounding islands that provide suitable prey organisms (sponges, corallimorphs, zoanthids, echinoderms, and other benthic invertebrates).  
Home range of a juvenile individual = < 1 km<sup>2</sup>.

**STOCK/POPULATIONS**

Status: Nesting colonies worldwide are depleted from over-exploitation.  
Listing: Appendix I Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Endangered under the US Endangered Species Act (ESA), Critically Endangered International Union for the

Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

**CARIBBEAN LIFE HISTORY OF THE SPECIES**

Greatest nesting colonies are in Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico and Mona Island, Puerto Rico (500 nests per season = 62,000 hatchlings per year at 79.2 % success). Nesting is year round with a significant peak August to November at Mona Island. Females come to shore for nesting and lay 4-5 clutches at two-week intervals, each containing approximately 150 eggs  
Eggs incubate during 50-70 days in the warm sands and usually hatch at night  
Hatchlings crawl to the sea and the pelagic phase occurs in floating *Sargassum* mats converging in the Atlantic Ocean (pelagic open water, deep ocean habitat).  
At approximately 20-25 cm (SCL) young juveniles (1-3? Yr. old) they establish in neritic (shallow coastal) habitats. Growth to adult sizes is presumed to be along islands and mainland coasts feeding until mating/nesting migrations ensue. Adult nesting females may be 65 cm SCL and upward (10-20 yr.?). Females have been recorded (satellite transmitters) to travel across the Caribbean Basin from Mona to Panama after nesting on Sardinera Beach, Mona. Females return to the nesting beach only after 2-5 yr. It is unknown if males migrate or remain residents at suitable foraging areas off nesting beaches after mating.

**THREATS**

Poaching: Meat and eggs are still consumed in many Caribbean Islands

By-catch: Turtles are easily entangled in drift nets and floating debris carried by oceanic currents.

Habitat: Large amounts of nesting habitat are being destroyed due to the value of beach front properties and tourist/residential projects on all Caribbean Islands

Lighting: Lights on beachfront roads, property and nearby establishments attract hatchlings away from the beach, and they are stranded away from the ocean.

Feral Animals: Dogs, cats, pigs, and other mammals have impacted significantly the percent survival of nests.

For more inf. on sea turtles visit: [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org)

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