



# MEET THE Green Sea Turtle



NATHAN NURIEL

## HEBREW NAME: צב ים ירוק *TZAV YAM YAROK*

צב (*tzav*) means turtle, ים (*yam*) means sea, and ירוק (*yarok*) means green. Green sea turtles get their name from the green color of their body fat, which comes from the chlorophyll in the plants they eat. So, they're not named for their shell, but for what's under it!

## WHERE THEY LIVE: THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE RED SEA

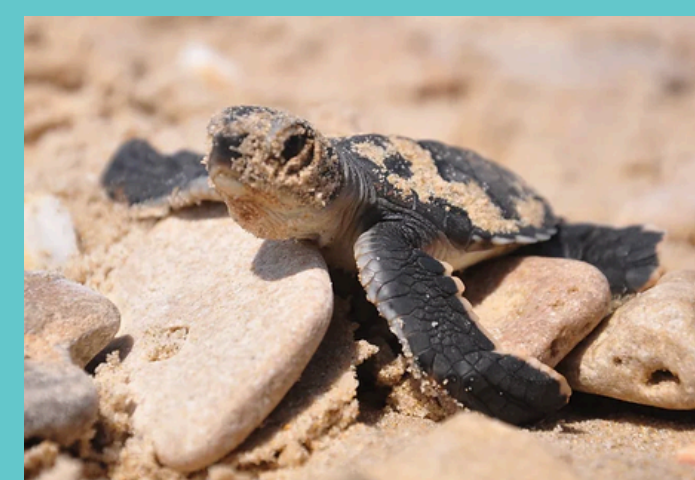
Green sea turtles use their strong, paddle-like flippers to swim through these waters, grazing on the native plants that grow there. By feeding on these plants, they help maintain healthy ecosystems, playing an important role in keeping the ocean environment balanced. The warm waters also provide a safe place for them to rest, swim, and even nest on the shores.



ADI KAHN

## SCIENTIFIC NAME: **CHELONIA MYDAS**

*pronounced keh-LOH-nee-uh  
MY-das*



YANIV LEVI

## DIET: SEAGRASS AND ALGAE

*Green sea turtles help keep the ocean bright by preventing these plants from growing too thick, letting more sunlight in.*

## STATUS: **ENDANGERED**

*There are only about 450 female green sea turtles laying eggs in the entire Mediterranean, with only about 30 of them nesting in Israel*





# Green Sea Turtle

## WHAT'S KILLING ISRAEL'S TURTLES?



BABY SEA TURTLE, BOAZ SHAHAM

### LIGHT POLLUTION

Female turtles need dark, quiet beaches to lay their eggs, but lights from urban development like roads, houses, and other buildings can scare them away. Hatchlings are meant to follow the moonlight reflecting off the ocean, but artificial lights can confuse them, leading them toward streets instead of the sea—where they can get lost, run over, or eaten.

### FISHING HAZARDS

Even after reaching the ocean, life isn't safe for green sea turtles. The most severe threat they face is getting caught in fishing gear, like nets, trawls, and hooks, which can lead to serious injuries or even suffocation. These dangers are everywhere in the Mediterranean, making survival tough for even the strongest swimmers.

### OTHER THREATS

- Oil spills pollute the ocean and coat turtles in toxic tar
- Beaches are destroyed by hotels, buildings, and roads
- Turtles are hurt by underwater explosions from gas and oil exploration or military operations
- Climate change heats up nesting sands and changes the food supply



A SEA TURTLE COVERED WITH TAR , ISRAEL NATIONAL SEA TURTLE RESCUE CENTER

## SO, HOW DO WE BRING GREEN SEA TURTLES BACK TO ISRAEL'S WATERS?





# Green Sea Turtle

## HOW SPNI IS HELPING BRING THEM BACK

### PROTECTING TURTLES' BEACH HABITATS

SPNI works to protect beaches in Israel, making sure they stay naturally dark at night for sea turtle nesting. They also organize beach cleanups, where kids and adults can volunteer to help remove plastic and other trash that could harm turtles. And when there's a major disaster like an oil spill, SPNI staff head straight to the shore to scrub oil off turtles and help save their lives.

### CREATING SAFER OCEANS

Out in the water, SPNI helps create marine reserves, special zones where turtles and other ocean animals can live without the danger of fishing, boats, or pollution. They've also helped pass fishing laws that limit bottom trawling (a harmful fishing method), and create a spring fishing break during turtle breeding season.



GREEN SEA TURTLE, ANDREY AHARONOV

### SAVING SEA LIFE WITH THE SEA WATCH APP

The Sea Watch App turns regular people into sea turtle protectors. If someone spots an injured turtle or sees something sketchy happening at the beach, they can report it through the app. That info goes straight to the Sea Turtle Rescue Center, a direct line to turtle emergency services. Thanks to this app, help gets there fast, and more sea turtles get a second chance.



NATURE DEFENSE ARMY PROJECT RESCUING A TURTLE

### NATURE DEFENSE ARMY PROJECT

In partnership with the IDF, SPNI runs this project to train soldiers to protect nature, including rescuing injured turtles and monitoring coastal habitats. One rescue involved naval soldiers saving a wounded turtle and safely bringing it to shore for treatment. Total heroes of the sea!



