

Project Update: September 2021

We have worked for the last 4 months on the realisation of the website, which is now finally online and ready to be used. Our website gives information about the project itself, our activities, our goals; it helps people learn about Red Sea marine turtles (basic information, curiosities, and more). We have a “download” section where users can find all our digital material.

We have included on the website an online form that will ease the data sharing process: people will be able to submit their sightings just following a self-explanatory questionnaire. Finally, we have developed a Red Sea map displaying all dive sites where turtles have been spotted and all registered turtles are listed per dive site (with photographs and basic information about the sighting). We believe this is a good way to credit the contributors and to engage more divers and snorkelers in sharing turtle sightings.

Website link: <https://turtlewatchegypt.net/>

All news about discoveries, project activities, and all information material are shared on our social media channels, to involve more people, including those who will soon return to work in the diving industry and tourists planning their next holiday in the Red Sea. We have started underlining the importance of following our code of conduct when driving speed boats in areas where turtles are feeding and resting and sharing information on how to behave if injured turtles are spotted. We will keep using social media, in addition to direct contacts with dive centre staff, to share awareness about this sensitive subject, definitely a key point for us this year.

Turtle report analysing, data compiling

We have noticed an increase in tourism in the Red Sea in the last 2 months, people are slowly coming back to the Red Sea for diving and snorkeling and most dive centres have managed to reopen (although with really limited staff). Resident guides and instructors are now going more often in the water and are very active in sharing turtle sightings. Dive centre members who have participated in our training event are also sharing their old sightings.

During the last 6 months, we have registered over 350 sightings (total number of registered sightings: 6110) and 47 new individual turtles (total number of turtles registered in our catalogue: 525).

During this second trimester we have also received reports of two marine turtles found dead (the cause of death is not clear in both cases) and a report of an injured turtle (the wounds are most probably caused by a boat propeller). Training and workshop for the dive centre staff active in the area where the injured turtle was found are going to be scheduled soon.

Additional information

We have launched collaboration with a group based in Dahab that has recently started collecting data on sea turtles in the Dahab area. This helps us integrate information about sea turtles in areas that are difficult for our team to reach (Dahab is very far from Marsa Alam where we are based).

We are monitoring the ongoing nesting activities in the Marsa Alam area, at the moment spotted mostly in two sites.