



# SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

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*Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy*

22 May, 2020

## Calling for Greater Measures to Protect Marine Turtles

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Turtle hatchlings  
leaving the nest

Annually on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, countries the world over celebrate World Turtle Day. Although it does not have the prominence given to other observances, it nonetheless is a very important observance as it brings to the fore the myriad of issues that plague the continued survival of these marine reptiles.

Marine turtles are present in all but Earth's coldest region and have been in existence since the time of the dinosaurs, more than 200 million years ago. Sadly, their population continue to dwindle as many of our species are falling either under the endangered list as in the case of the Leatherback turtle and the Hawksbill turtle which are now critically endangered.

The Saint Lucia National Trust has and continues to advocate for a more sustainable management plan for marine turtles. Our Officers continue to patrol the Pointe Sable Environmental Protection Area (PSEPA), a major nesting ground for sea turtles in Saint Lucia, recording their observations and collecting data such as the species that nest, number of nests and number of hatchlings. We envisage that the data collected will help to drive more sustainable management practices.

Sadly, Saint Lucia is one of only a handful of nations in the wider Caribbean region that still sanctions an annual open season (October–December) for hunting sea turtles out at sea. However, we are still faced with gruesome photos of slaughtered turtles along our coastlines, an act that is illegal under current laws. Poachers continue to seek out turtle eggs as it is considered a delicacy and believed to



PSEPA- A popular turtle nesting site

act as an aphrodisiac. We have much to lose if these wanton acts continue as it can only lead to the complete annihilation of this species that made planet Earth its home long before mankind.

As we celebrate World Turtle Day let us reflect on some of our bad practices that can endanger the lives of marine turtles: single use plastics which if not disposed of properly ends up in our ocean beds, illegal sand mining which destroys the habitat of nesting turtles, the use of pesticides killing our coral reefs, the turtles feeding ground and the killing of turtles on our beaches.



Students learning about turtles

Let us all be vigilant as the sea turtles nesting season approaches. If you observe any suspicious or illegal activities, or turtle or hatchlings in distress and you are not sure what to do, contact personnel from the Department of Fisheries at 468-4135/4139.

We can work together to ensure these creatures survive another million years and that future generations would be able to experience the wonder and pleasure of coexisting with them.