

Tell President Obama to Save Endangered Sea Turtles in U.S. Waters!

What's the Problem? The U.S. government allows over 50,000 endangered and threatened sea turtles to be needlessly killed every year by shrimp trawl fishing boats in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Right now, not all shrimp boats are required by the government to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). This means that sea turtles can drown in these nets that do not have TEDs! **Luckily, there is a simple solution, but we need your help to convince President Obama and Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker to save thousands of sea turtles every year by requiring all shrimp boats to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs).**

What's a Turtle Excluder Device (TED)? Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) are specialized metal grates inserted in trawl nets that allow captured sea turtles to escape. The government has required TEDs on certain shrimp boats for over 20 years, but other boats do not need to have them, even though TEDs are 97 percent effective at saving sea turtles.

Why Are Sea Turtles Important to Ocean Ecosystems? Sea turtles have played vital roles in maintaining the health of the world's oceans for more than 100 million years. Sea turtles help maintain healthy seagrass beds and coral reefs that provide key habitats for other marine life and help balance marine food webs.

What Species of Sea Turtles are Impacted? Six species of sea turtles swim in U.S. waters: green, hawksbill, Kemp's ridley, leatherback, loggerhead and olive ridley. Each of these species is endangered or threatened. There are five sea turtle species that interact with shrimp trawls in the Southeast:



Kemp's ridley sea turtles are the smallest of the sea turtles. **Fun fact: Kemp's ridleys' favorite food is crab!**

Leatherback sea turtles, on a diet of almost exclusively jellyfish, can grow to be 4-8 feet long and weigh 650-1,300 pounds. **Fun fact: Leatherbacks don't actually have a shell!**



Loggerhead sea turtles, named for their enormous heads, are the most common sea turtle in the southeastern U.S.

Fun fact: Eggs in a loggerhead nest that is below 82 degrees Fahrenheit will produce more males, while a nest above 85 degrees will produce mostly females.



Green sea turtle shells are actually black, gray, olive green, yellow, or brown with patterns, stripes or spots of black and white. It's actually their fat and other tissues inside their shell that are green, hence their name. **Fun fact: Their insides are green, because they are herbivorous and primarily eat seagrasses and algae.**

Hawksbill sea turtles are named for their distinct beak-like mouths. **Fun fact: Hawksbills mainly feed on reef sponges, whose bodies contain tiny indigestible glass needles!**



How Can You Help? Write a letter or draw a picture to President Obama and Secretary Penny Pritzker telling them why you love sea turtles and why they should be protected in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. **Oceana and One More Generation** will collect the letters and present them to the U.S. government on World Sea Turtle Day, June 16, 2016. Please send your letters no later than **May 23, 2016** to:

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Please visit: usa.oceana.org/turtles
to learn more

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