

Protecting endangered sea turtles worldwide: New TUI Turtle Aid projects launched in Cape Verde, Kenya, Turkey and Greece

- *Almost 500,000 sea turtle hatchlings will be protected through beach monitoring, nest relocation, and patrols conducted on the ground and by drones*
- *More than 200,000 visitors and locals will be educated in marine conservation and turtle-friendly tourism through info kiosks, public presentations and community engagement across the world*
- *TUI Turtle Aid programme is introducing a global, turtle-friendly certification scheme which will be pioneered by 30 beachfront businesses across these four holiday destinations*
- *New projects are launched as part of the TUI Care Foundation's Marine May, which emphasises the importance of marine conservation, and to recognise World Turtle Day on May 23rd*

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Berlin, 22 May 2024. *Tourism is the main source of income for many communities on Cape Verde and Greece as well as in coastal regions of Turkey and Kenya. The tourism sector has been the main driver for development in these destinations over recent last decades, and in many cases, this has resulted in added pressure on the natural habitats of endangered sea turtles. For this reason, the TUI Care Foundation set up the TUI Turtle Aid programme, to protect endangered and vulnerable sea turtles, especially around nesting beaches. By working with local NGOs and beachfront tourism businesses, the programme also supports the creation of turtle friendly beaches and engages tourists by raising awareness about turtles and how to protect them.*

TUI Turtle Aid Cape Verde

The Cape Verdean archipelago boasts the largest nesting population of loggerhead sea turtles in the world, with the island of Sal alone having more loggerhead sea turtles than the entire Mediterranean basin. Rapid coastal development, habitat loss and pollution put significant pressure on the island's limited natural resources. Additionally, poaching of adult sea turtles remains a threat, causing the death of more than a hundred adult female loggerheads annually on the island of Sal alone.

In Cape Verde, the TUI Care Foundation's Turtle Aid Programme, in partnership with Project Biodiversity, focuses on the protection of sea turtles through on-foot and drone monitoring of nesting beaches. This includes the relocation of endangered nests to conservation hatcheries or naturally safe spots on the beach. Awareness activities include radio programmes and workshops organised with schools, aiming to educate a broader audience on the importance of marine conservation.

TUI Turtle Aid Kenya

Kenya's coastal cities of Watamu and Diani face similar challenges to those in Cape Verde, with threats to sea turtle populations from habitat loss and human activities. The TUI Turtle Aid Programme, in collaboration with Local Ocean Conservation (LOC), works to protect sea turtles in various ways. Over 200 adult sea turtles will be rehabilitated, and thousands of hatchlings will be protected through night patrols on the beaches. LOC's Turtle Rehabilitation Centre treats and rehabilitates injured turtles and releases them back into the ocean. In Diani, two new rehabilitation tanks will be installed to treat injured sea turtles.

The project in Kenya also aims to raise awareness through a local visitor centre that educates community members and visitors about sea turtle conservation. The centre will also connect community-organised tours and tourist activities with hotels, providing a source of income for local communities.

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TUI Turtle Aid Turkey

On the Turkish coastlines of Antalya and the Muğla region, the TUI Care Foundation partners with local NGOs DEKAMER and EKAD to protect sea turtles. Activities include installing protective cages over nests and conducting nightly patrols to ensure the safety of the eggs and to assist hatchlings in reaching the sea. DEKAMER's rehabilitation centre in Dalyan treats injured sea turtles and educates the public about the challenges they face. With EKAD, working in Antalya and Belek, the TUI Turtle Aid initiative collaborates with tourism businesses to create a safer environment for sea turtles, enhancing conservation efforts through community involvement and awareness.

Both partners engage local schools, visitors, fishermen cooperatives, and businesses through workshops, seminars, and field trips, emphasising the importance of protecting endangered sea turtles and their habitats.

TUI Turtle Aid Greece

In Greece, the TUI Turtle Aid Programme focuses on the northern coast of Crete, particularly in the resort towns of Rethymno and Chania. In partnership with Greek NGO ARCHELON, the programme protects nesting sites and promotes awareness amongst tourists and locals. This includes info kiosks in Rethymno and Chania, nest excavation events open to the public, information booths at tourism venues, and guided beach walks.

Introducing a turtle-friendly business certification

In addition to joint activities with local turtle NGOs in various destinations, TUI Turtle Aid has developed a unique turtle-friendly business guideline and certification scheme for beachfront hotels in the participating destinations. This scheme includes 40 criteria to minimise the impact of hotel activities on turtle nesting. Mandatory measures include removing obstacles from beaches from dusk until dawn, raising guest awareness, and reducing light pollution. Thirty hotels across the programme locations will join the scheme and apply for this certification, promoting a more sustainable and turtle-friendly tourism industry.

The TUI Care Foundation's 'Marine May' is a month of activities dedicated to ocean preservation. Through a series of project launches and educational activities, it emphasises the importance of sustainable practices to safeguard marine ecosystems for local communities and generations to come.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

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