

Turtle Profiles

Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Stock: Part of the hawksbill — north Queensland (H-nQld) stock

Status: Australia Vulnerable, Queensland Endangered

Population Trend: Decline (3)

Preferred habitat: Tidal and sub-tidal coral and rocky reef habitats throughout tropical and warm temperate waters

Diet: Sponges, seagrasses, algae, soft corals and shellfish

Important nesting sites: Northern Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait including Long (Sassie), Hawkesbury, Milman, Boydong, Zuizin, Mimi, Bourke, Aukane, Layoak, Bet, Dadalai and Gebar Islands

Mating: Year-round

Nesting: Year-round (peak: December—February)



Image: Hawksbill turtle adult. Photo: Colin Limpus.

Physical characteristics:

Hawksbill Adult

- 4 pairs or more of large scales on either side (costal scales) of the carapace
- Thick overlapping carapace scales
- Carapace high domed
- Colour, olive-green or brown, variegated with brown or black markings
- Adult carapace approximately 0.8 metres
- Distinctive parrot-like beak

Hawksbill Hatchling

- Colour, brown/black plastron
- Carapace 4 cm long



Image: Hawksbill turtle hatchling. Photo: Colin Limpus.