

Turtle Profiles

Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

Stock: Part of the loggerhead south-west Pacific (LH-swPac) stock

Status: IUCN Red List Critically Endangered (LH-swPac), Australia Endangered, Queensland Endangered

Population Trend: Early stages of decline (3)

Preferred habitat: Coral reefs, bays and estuaries in tropical and warm, temperate waters

Diet: Carnivorous (shellfish, crabs, sea urchins and jellyfish)

Important nesting sites: Southern Great Barrier Reef and adjacent mainland coastal areas, including Mon Repos, Wreck Rock, Wreck Island, Erskine Island, Tryon Island and Sunshine Coast

Mating: October—December (peak: November)

Nesting: October—March (peak: December—January)

Hatching: December—May (peak: February—March).

Physical characteristics:

Loggerhead adult

- 5 pairs (rarely 6) of large scales on each side (costal scales) of the carapace
- Non-overlapping carapace scales
- Carapace longer than wide
- Colour, red-brown to brown carapace, yellow plastron
- Adult carapace approximately 1.0 m
- Large head relative to body with strong jaws and parrot-like beak.

Loggerhead hatchling

- Colour, dark brown to grey carapace, dark plastron
- Carapace 4-4.8 cm long

Trends in nesting numbers at index beaches, combined with demographic information from foraging grounds (where available) and known sources of mortality are used to infer trends in stock viability. (3)



Image: Loggerhead turtle adult. Photo: Colin Limpus.



Image: Loggerhead turtle hatchling. Photo: Colin Limpus.