

MIGRATION ROUTE OF NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACKS



Reference: State of the World's Sea Turtles Report, Volume XI, 2011

LEATHERBACKS IN THE GUIANAS AND TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

LEATHERBACK *(Dermochelys coriacea)*

Subpopulation: Northwest Atlantic

Common names: Aitkanti (SR), Leatherback (ENG), Mata mata (GY), Caldon (TT), Coffin back (TT), Batalie (Tobago)

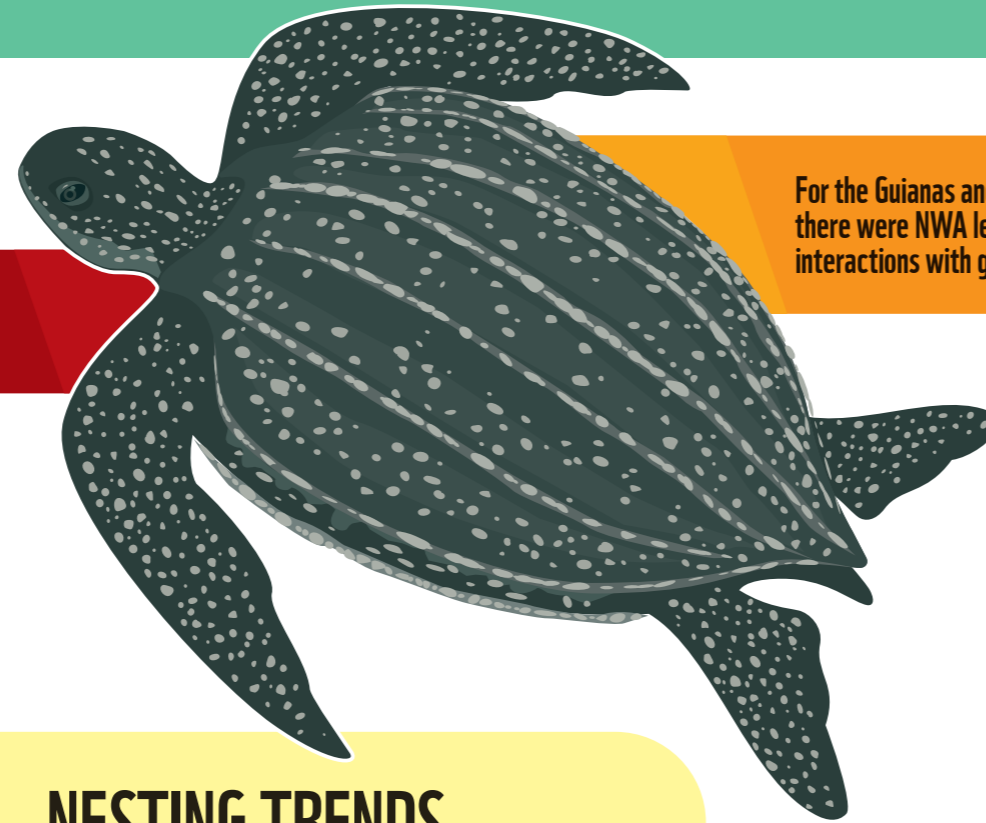
Occurrence: most common in French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago

Status: **ENDANGERED**



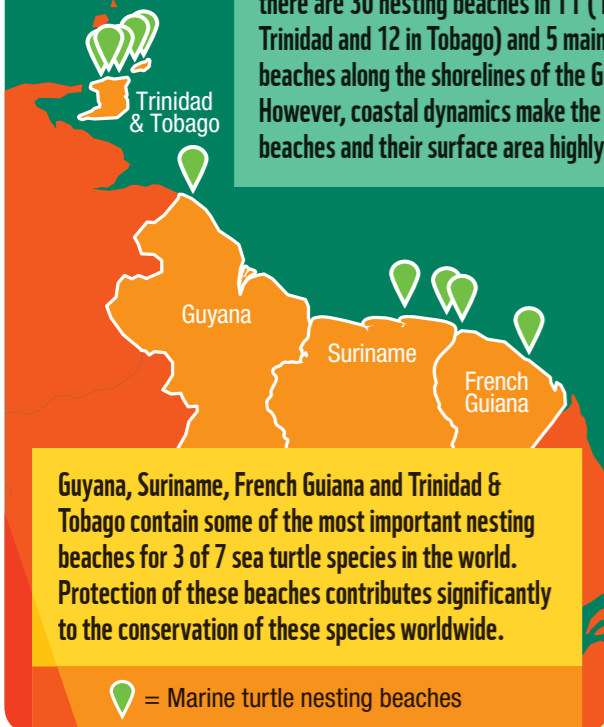
When not breeding, leatherbacks from this region migrate to the North Atlantic all the way to Nova Scotia, Canada to feed on the abundant jellyfish, covering over 10,000 km.

For the Guianas and Trinidad & Tobago there were NWA leatherback bycatch interactions with gillnet fisheries.



MAJOR NESTING SITES

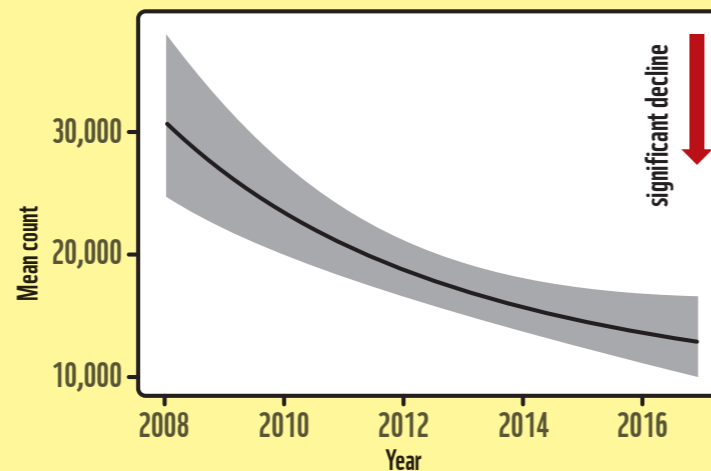
The total length of the shorelines are: 363 km of TT and 1,145 km in the Guianas. Currently, there are 30 nesting beaches in TT (18 in Trinidad and 12 in Tobago) and 5 main nesting beaches along the shorelines of the Guianas. However, coastal dynamics make the number of beaches and their surface area highly variable.



Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and Trinidad & Tobago contain some of the most important nesting beaches for 3 of 7 sea turtle species in the world. Protection of these beaches contributes significantly to the conservation of these species worldwide.

= Marine turtle nesting beaches

NESTING TRENDS GUIANAS / TRINIDAD



Source: NWA leatherback working group 2018

Monitoring of the Guianas nesting beaches dates back to the 1980s, providing a valuable long term data set.

Because sea turtles are highly migratory, protecting them requires a regional and international approach.

WWF-Guianas is working with partners in all four countries to ensure the long-term protection of the shared sea turtle populations.

THREATS:

- IUU (illegal unreported unregulated) fishing
- Bycatch (fish trawlers, tuna longlines and drifting gillnets)
- Illegal consumption of eggs (mostly green turtle eggs)
- human disturbance (e.g. light pollution)
- Coastal destruction and alteration
- Sandmining
- Off-shore oil and gas development
- Climate change
- Dog predation
- Jaguar predation
- Eroding beaches

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE NWA LEATHERBACK POPULATION

The NWA leatherback action plan project focuses on the Leatherback sea turtle population of the Guianas (Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana) and neighboring Trinidad and Tobago in attempt to implement protection measures for these nesting populations. These nesting sites are known to have the largest populations of Leatherbacks in the Wider Caribbean region.

The action plan attempts to address the declining populations throughout these nesting regions by identifying local threats, propose conservation solutions and prioritize solutions, all resulting in a Regional Action Plan for management.

The overall goal for this plan is to identify and address the biggest threats to the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback sea turtles so as to foster a stabilization of the populations and the end of the continuous population decline by 2030.

