



Aug 15

National Ecology Day

The NPCSC designated August 15 as "National Ecology Day" to enhance public awareness of ecological civilization construction and environmental protection.



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Ecological conservation starts with you and me

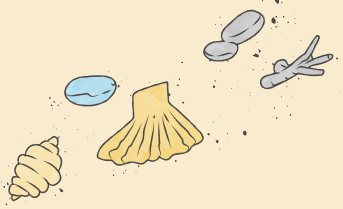
~ ~ ~ Fun Facts of Green Sea Turtle ~ ~ ~



Green sea turtles are the only sea turtles in the world that breed in Hong Kong and play an important role in the ocean and ecological chain. Green sea turtles help mitigate the climate crisis by eating seagrass, which increases the growth and nutritional content of seagrass leaves and prevents seagrass beds from overgrowing, blocking water flow and covering the seabed. In addition, the warming ocean has promoted the proliferation of jellyfish, and green sea turtles can control the number of jellyfish by preying on jellyfish to avoid the negative impact of too many jellyfish on ecosystems. However, due to ecological damage, such as marine pollution and fishery bycatch, green sea turtles' lives are seriously threatened, and they have been rated as endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Q1. Why have fewer green sea turtles landed in Hong Kong to lay eggs in recent years?

1. The nesting site of green sea turtles have been damaged: Environmental pollution and urbanization, such as reclamation and other development infrastructure projects, damaging the nesting site of green sea turtles. The marine environment has become complicated and it is difficult for green sea turtles to find their spawning grounds;
2. Light pollution (including lights from ships): Lighting facilities on the beach can also easily cause newborn turtles to get lost and find their way to the sea, leaving their bodies exposed on the beach;
3. Human disturbance: Humans have dug away the sand and gravel on the beach where green sea turtles lay their eggs, leaving the mother turtle nowhere to lay her eggs. After birth, the baby turtles will also die on the beach because they cannot climb the gravel, or they will be eaten by other animals. In addition, the laying of eggs by sea turtles also attracts disturbance from unsuspecting tourists, which cause negative impact on the reproduction of sea turtles.



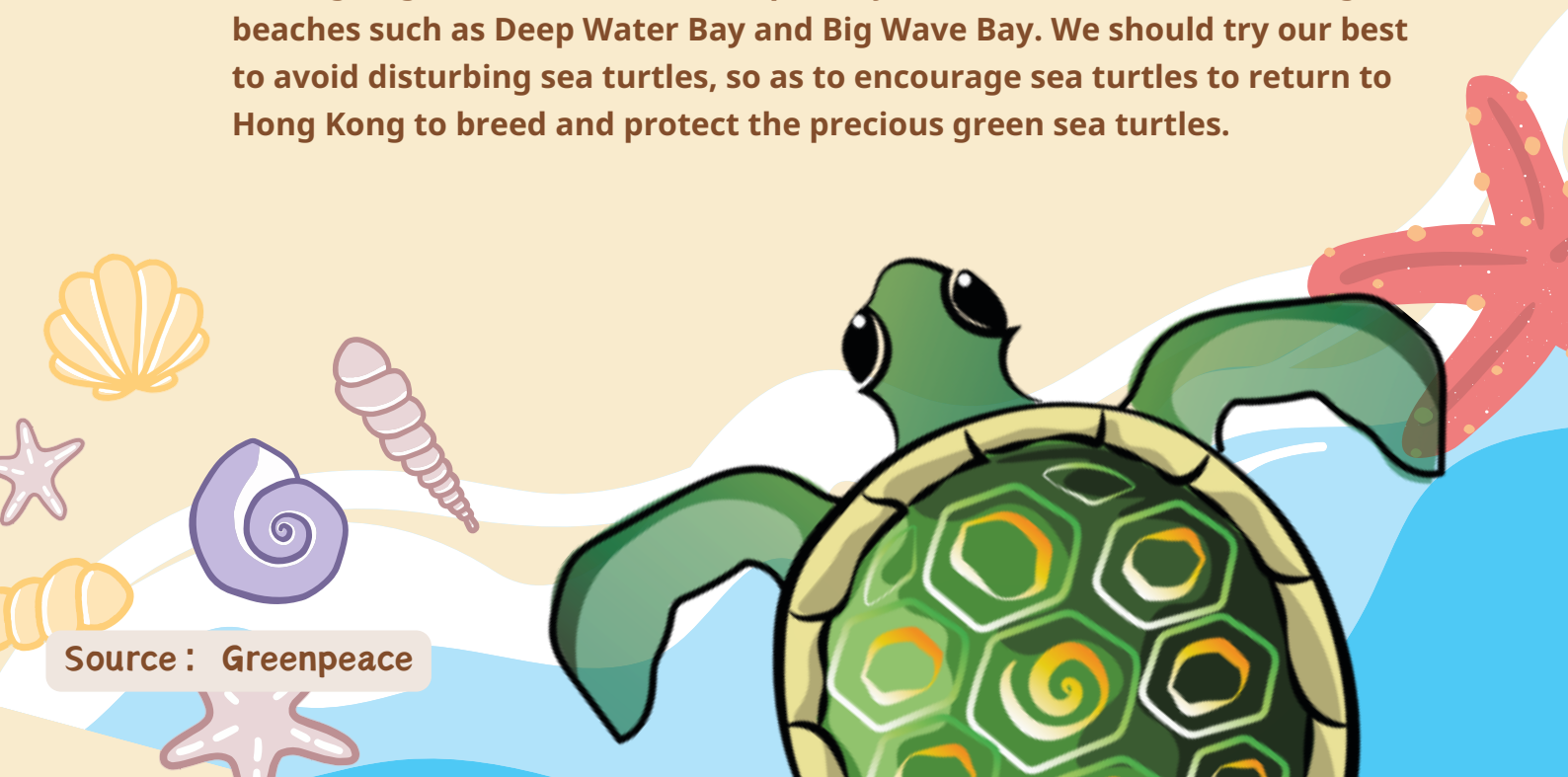
Q2. Why are sea turtles particularly attracted to plastic trash?

Microorganisms and algae will attach to marine garbage, and plastic will release a chemical after being soaked for a long time, making sea turtles think they smell food. As many as 52% of the world's sea turtles have ingested plastic, and many green sea turtle carcasses have been found in Hong Kong in recent years. In October 2020, two endangered species, green sea turtles, were discovered in Tung Wan, Cheung Chau. Researchers found rubber gloves and fish in the carcasses of these two immature green sea turtles. Marine garbage such as rubber gloves, fishing line, and plastic bags. The team found that except for a small portion of food and feces, all the green sea turtle's digestive system is composed of marine debris. Because microorganisms and algae will attach to marine garbage, and plastic will release a chemical after being soaked for a long time, making sea turtles think they smell food and swallow the plastic bags as seaweed.



Q3. What can we do?

1. **Waste reduction at the source:** eliminate the hazards of plastic and jointly create a more sustainable planet to ensure that animals' and our health are no longer threatened by plastic waste and microplastics;
2. **Take your litter home:** Whether you go to the countryside or the beach, remember to take away your litter and keep the environment clean;
3. **Avoid going to restricted areas:** Especially at known sea turtle breeding beaches such as Deep Water Bay and Big Wave Bay. We should try our best to avoid disturbing sea turtles, so as to encourage sea turtles to return to Hong Kong to breed and protect the precious green sea turtles.



Source : Greenpeace