

Closure of Sea Turtle Fishery

The Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries wishes to inform the public that the sea turtle fishery will be closed as of January 1, 2011 until September 30, 2011, both days inclusive. According to the Fisheries Regulations No.9 of 1994, Section 33 (1 and 2) of the Regulations states:

No person shall:

disturb, remove from the fishery waters, expose for sale, sell, purchase, or at any time have in his possession any turtle eggs;

interfere with any turtle nest, or turtle that is nesting;

remove from the fishery waters, expose for sale, sell purchase or at any time have in his possession any undersized turtle;

set within 100 metres of the shores of Saint Lucia any net or seine or any other artifice for the purpose of or with the intention of fishing for, catching or taking any turtle.

In this Regulation-

“turtle” includes the whole or any part of any turtle;

undersized means a weight less than:

27.22 kilograms (60lbs) for Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*);

34.02 kilograms (75lbs) for Green (*Chelonia mydas*) and

Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*).

Therefore, no person shall fish for, remove from the fishery waters, or at any time have in his/her possession, expose for sale, sell or purchase any sea turtle during the closed fishery, or as otherwise stated by the Minister by notice published in the Gazette and in a newspaper which is printed or circulated in the State.

Further, please note that the sea turtle nesting season typically extends between March and November of each year. As such, the public is reminded that it is illegal to interfere with any sea turtle nest, hatchling (baby turtle) or sea turtle that is nesting. The Department of Fisheries seeks the cooperation of all fishers and urges members of the public to report to the marine police or nearest police station any person found slaughtering a sea turtle on a beach or elsewhere, taking or consuming sea turtle eggs, selling sea turtle eggs or meat, attempting to leave the country with sea turtle eggs, meat or other sea turtle products or holding a baby or adult sea turtle as a pet.

Any contravention of the Fisheries Regulations No.9 of 1994 is subject to a maximum fine of five thousand dollars (\$5000) as stipulated under the Fisheries Act No.10 of 1984 and the Fisheries Regulations No.9 of 1994.

Honourable Ezechiele Joseph

Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries