



# MEDASSET

Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles

Press Release  
June 25<sup>th</sup> 2010

## Sea turtles in Albania Final third year of research launched!

The third and final phase of MEDASSET's project "*Monitoring and conservation of important sea turtle feeding grounds in the Patok Area of Albania 2008-2010*" was launched on June 18th 2010. Within the framework of MEDASSET's sea turtle conservation programmes in the Mediterranean, research, capacity building and awareness-raising is being carried out since 2008 in Patok, on the northern coast of Albania in the Adriatic Sea.

Principal Researcher and Sea Turtle Specialist, Dr. Michael White was warmly welcomed back by the Patok community and the local fishermen. Sea turtle monitoring and tagging will continue for a third consecutive year at Patok, with the help of Prof. Idriz Haxhiu of the University of Tirana, who collected data through winter and spring 2010. As per previous years, the project will train Albanian University students on monitoring methodologies in order to create the foundations for the continuation of sea turtle conservation activities in this country.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 18 loggerhead and 2 green turtles were tagged during an educational field trip of a group of Tirana University biology students. Top Channel News filmed the occasion and interviewed Prof. Haxhiu, who organised the field trip. DNA samples collected by Dr. White, will help identify the reproductive population that turtles foraging in Patok belong to.

The first ever satellite tracking programme launched from Albania in Patok by MEDASSET, continues to provide information on the migration of three sea turtles, with one male returning to the area after having travelled during the winter to the North of the island of Corfu, Greece.

Research results are expected to lead to the identification of the Patok area as a nationally and regionally important foraging habitat for loggerhead turtles in the Mediterranean. The project's long-term aim is the full protection of the endangered sea turtles and of this important habitat under Albanian national law.

Co-funding for 2010 was granted by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) of the United Nations Environment Programme-Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation, the British Chelonia Group, the Spear Charitable Trust and the Panton Trust.



*Training Albanian University Students on Sea Turtle Data Collection*

## Editor's Notes

1. For more information on the project click [here](#). The three-year project "Monitoring and conservation of important sea turtle feeding grounds in the Patok Area of Albania, 2008-2010" follows MEDASSET's '*Rapid Assessment of important Marine Turtle habitats in the coastal area of Albania*' in 2005 (White, et al, 2006). For the 2009 research results please click [here](#).
2. Visit [Turtle Tracking](#) at [www.medasset.org](http://www.medasset.org) to view maps of the migration routes of the three turtles: "Shpresa", "Guximtari" and "Patoku".
3. MEDASSET - the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles, founded in 1988, is an international NGO registered as a charity and private company in the UK and as a Non Profit Organisation in Greece. MEDASSET plays an active role in the study and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats throughout the Mediterranean, through scientific research, environmental education, political lobbying and raising public awareness. The organisation has been a Partner to the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of UNEP and a Permanent Observer-member of the Bern Convention at the Council of Europe since 1988. In 2009, MEDASSET was awarded Partner status for the implementation of UNEP's Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mediterranean Turtles.

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