



## MARINE TURTLE KILLED BY BOAT PROPELLER

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A scuba diving club discovered a dead green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, near l'Hermitage. The advanced state of decomposition did not allow sending it to Kélonia in order to complete study on marine turtles of Reunion Island. The analysis of the pictures showed that the turtles died from an injury made by a boat propeller on the carapace.

The wound occurred a few weeks ago when a diver took pictures of a wounded turtles but still alive around the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2008. This picture was sent to Kelonia to complete the photo identification database.

Collisions with boat, particularly propeller, are one of the causes of injuries and sometimes death of marine turtles, especially green turtles in Reunion Island. These turtles spend time at the surface to bask and increase their body temperature so that it remains above the external temperature. It increases their metabolism and ease digestion. The time spent basking is even longer during austral winter as temperatures tend to be colder. Turtles tend to doze while basking and therefore can be hit by speed boats.

Boat users often tend to forget that the sea is the home of many species and that collision (accidents) can happen. To avoid these accidents, we need to look beyond the boat and reduce speed when approaching the coast, where marine life is more abundant.

### **We want your pictures!**

If you take pictures of marine turtles while diving you can send them to us and indicate the place and date: [contact@kelonia.org](mailto:contact@kelonia.org)

Kelonia recently put in place a programme that uses the scutes of the head profile to identify individuals in Reunion. The scute pattern on the head profile is thought to be like human fingerprint for marine turtles. Kelonia can tell you the story of the turtle, if it has already been taken in photo and if it has been classified in Kelonia's database.

This programme of photo identification is in progress with the participation of the University of Reunion Island and IFREMER, the research institute for marine resources exploitation. A software associated with the photo identification will be presented to ocean users so they can share their pictures and fill the database.

For more information please contact:

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Photo 1. Credit author: CSAL diving club ; photo taken in September 2008



Photo 2. Credit author: CORAIL diving club ; photo taken in October 2008