

# LEATHERBACK

## TURTLE



HAVE YOU SEEN ONE

The Chatham Islands Leatherback Project is a non-profit community research initiative. Developed with the support of The State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) it aims to promote and collect sighting and stranding data of leatherback turtles at the Chatham Islands.

The leatherback turtle is the largest living reptile on the planet today and is a living relic of the age of the dinosaurs. Sadly, human impacts have led to massive declines of this species worldwide. Today, the leatherback turtle is listed as "Critically Endangered" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.iucnredlist.org>). That means for the leatherback it is certainly possible that the leatherback turtle could become extinct from the Pacific Ocean within our lifetimes. But you can help!

We now know that New Zealand waters may be an important foraging ground for this species, so the data collected from this project will help build a better picture of when and where this critically endangered species is encountered at the Chatham Islands. You can help by providing vital information on leatherback sightings by calling the Department of Conservation: 0800 DOC HOT line (0800 362 468) or by sending this completed form to the Chatham Islands Department of Conservation Area Office. The sighting form can also be completed online at [www.bigfish.net.nz](http://www.bigfish.net.nz)

**If any sick, injured (entangled), or stranded turtles are encountered, please notify the Department of Conservation hotline (immediately):**

**0800 DOC HOT line (0800 362 468)**

If you would like further information about marine turtles in New Zealand please visit the website [www.bigfish.net.nz](http://www.bigfish.net.nz)

### CODE OF CONDUCT

All marine turtles are protected in accordance with the New Zealand Wildlife Act 1953 and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). If a marine turtle is encountered please follow these simple rules:

- Restrict your boat speed to 6 knots (10 kph) when approaching or near to individuals in the water.
- When your vessel is closer than 10 m put your engine in neutral to avoid disturbance and injury to animals, e.g. Prop contact.
- If diving do not attempt to touch, ride or chase animals; avoid blocking their path and maintain a distance of at least 2 m.
- If an animal is found stranded, entangled or injured contact DOC immediately. Avoid handling the animal unless it is in immediate danger.

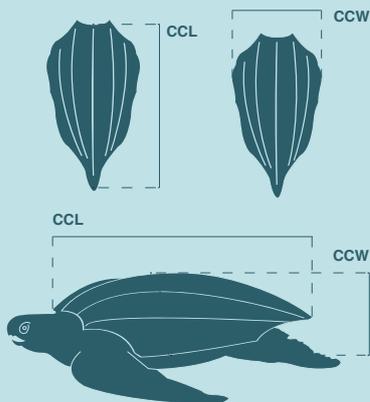
# IDENTIFICATION

## KEY



# MEASURING

## TURTLES



CCL:.....

CCW:.....

Tail length.....

Weight.....

Tagged:  Yes  No

Tag numbers:.....

Description:.....

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# REPORTING

## A SIGHTING

Please use the form below to provide as much information as possible of turtle encountered.

Office only—Record No: .....

Location: ..... Weather: ..... Date:.....

Time: ..... Sea depth: ..... m Sea temp..... Deg C

Latitude: ..... S Longitude: ..... E

Sighting type:  Underwater  From boat  Offshore  From aircraft  Other

Habitat:  Beach  Estuary  Coastal  Open Sea  Offshore Island  Other

Size: ..... m (length of shell) Marking: .....

ID character used:  Colour  Shell size  Other

Turtle description:  Live  Dead  Stranded  Injured  Incidental catch  Other

Tagged:  Yes  No Tag Number(s): .....

Behaviour:  Feeding  Resting  Swimming  Other

Entangled:  Yes  No Debris description: .....

Action taken (if captured/rescued):

Image taken:  Yes  No Sent to: .....

Contact name: ..... Mobile:.....

Phone: (.....) ..... Email: .....

Address:.....

Comments:.....

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