

It's a record summer for some turtles

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Italian scientists say an endangered species of marine turtle -- loggerhead turtles -- are appearing along Italy's southern shores in increasing numbers.

Researchers say record numbers of loggerheads have been spotted in waters off Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and even Sardinia, the Italian news agency ANSA reported Monday.

More than 15 nesting sites have been reported, although the most important nesting grounds for loggerhead turtles in the Mediterranean are along the coasts of Turkey, Libya and Cyprus.

But the turtle's survival is increasingly under threat from aggressive fishing practices, pollution, shipping traffic and habitat degradation, particularly due to rising tourism.

Loggerheads are among the largest of marine turtles, sometimes measuring more than 4 feet in shell length and weighing up to 400 pounds.

Females lay between 40 and 190 eggs per clutch.

Major nesting grounds apart from the Mediterranean are in the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, particularly off the coast of Florida and South Carolina, ANSA said.

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