

Leatherback turtle eggs crushed in Trinidad

July 10 2012



Leatherback turtle hatchlings make their way into the sea in 2004. Hundreds, possibly thousands of turtle eggs and hatchlings have been destroyed on the northern Trinidad coast by government workers who drove their bulldozers over the breeding ground.

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The incident occurred at the weekend when Ministry of Public Works employees engaged on a river diversion scheme on the north coast of the [Caribbean island](#) inadvertently crushed the leatherback eggs and hatchlings.

Sherwin Reyz, an environmentalist with the conservation organization Grande Riviere, said Tuesday that the workers botched the job by digging up an important spawning area.

"I'm saying that this part of the beach is where most nesting turtles and thousands of eggs and chicks were lost," Reyz, noting that vultures and stray dogs descended on the site in the aftermath, told local media

"They had a very good meal, I was in tears," added Reys, who gave the 20,000 estimate for the number of reptiles lost, having struggled to save hundreds that had been disturbed but not destroyed by the heavy machinery.

However, an official from the Environmental Management Authority of Trinidad and Tobago said "only a few hundred," eggs or [hatchlings](#) had been lost.

The [leatherback turtle](#), which can measure as long as two meters (6.6 feet) and weigh more than 600 kilos, is the largest of all living [sea turtles](#). It differs from other turtles as it does not have a bony shell, its outer back being a mixture of skin and flesh.

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