

Green sea turtles recover in Florida, Mexico

March 20 2015



In the waters of the west Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, green turtles are found from Texas to Massachusetts, as well as the US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico

Long considered an endangered species, green sea turtles in Florida and Mexico have bounced back and officials said Friday they are seeking to change the turtles' protected status to "threatened."

The move comes after decades of efforts to save one of world's largest breed of sea turtles, *Chelonia mydas*, which have been on the endangered species list since 1978.

"The proposal to revise the status of green sea turtles breeding in Florida and Mexico from endangered to threatened shows that conservation is making a difference, and once again demonstrates the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act in protecting and recovering our most at-risk species," said US Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, green turtles "are threatened by overharvesting of their eggs, hunting of adults, being caught in fishing gear and loss of nesting beach sites."

But the Fish and Wildlife Service now says focused strategies—like including turtle-excluder devices, or holes the turtles can escape through, in fishing nets and protecting beach habitat where the young turtles hatch—have helped the population recover.

The proposal to change the status of green sea turtles from endangered to threatened is now open for a 90-day comment period before any formal decision is made.

The change would only apply to the two green sea turtle breeding populations in Florida and Mexico.

Based on a scientific review of [green sea turtle](#) populations worldwide, the US government is also proposing to reclassify the entire species into 11 distinct population segments, to provide a "more tailored approach for managers to address specific threats facing different populations," the FWS said.

Green sea turtles are believed to live in the coastal areas of more than 140 countries, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

In the waters of the west Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, [green turtles](#) are

found from Texas to Massachusetts, as well as the US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Green sea turtles recover in Florida, Mexico (2015, March 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-green-sea-turtles-recover-florida.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.