Over 300 endangered turtles hatch in Singapore

September 28 2018

Hawksbill turtles are considered critically endangered

More than 300 hawksbill turtles have hatched on beaches in Singapore this month and been released into the sea, authorities said Friday, in a boost for the critically endangered creatures.

They hatched on three beaches across the tropical Southeast Asian country, according to the National Parks Board, which oversees parks and nature reserves.

Over 100 turtles hatched on Sentosa Island, a popular tourist destination, according to the organisation that manages the island. After their nest was discovered in July, a barrier was erected around the site to protect it from monitor lizards and crabs

It was the fourth time since 1996 that eggs of the critically endangered turtles have hatched on Sentosa.

The other turtle nests were discovered at a beach on the east coast and on Satumu island south of the Singapore mainland, the parks board said. A total of 321 turtles hatched over a 10-day period from September 15.

Hawksbills get their names from their narrow pointed beaks and are found throughout the world's tropical oceans, mainly around coral reefs.

They are threatened by damage to their natural habitats from pollution and coastal developments, and are also targeted by poachers.

Their body parts are used to make turtle soup and their shells are crushed into powder for use in jelly dessert. The Hawksbill shell is also used to make products like combs and ornamental hairpins.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature classifies the turtles as critically endangered.

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