

Turtle Conservation Training Course

The course includes:

Briefing on

- (a) Turtles and Turtle Biology (includes provision of basic publications, Manual, etc)
- (b) Cyprus Turtle Conservation Project (Lara/Toxeftra reserve and Polis/Limni beaches); includes provision of copies of leaflets and other publications and of a videotape on the project.

Turtle conservation techniques and fieldwork covered:

1. Beach management.
2. Spotting and approaching nesting females (use of night sight equipment).
3. Tagging turtles. (tagging of both species of turtle took place during the participants stay)
4. Identification of turtles nests and tracks.
5. Locating eggs in the nest.
6. Protection of nests *in situ*.
7. Removal of eggs and transportation and replanting in hatchery.
8. Collecting and releasing hatchlings.
9. Digging up finished nests and analysing the situation (unfertilised eggs etc)
10. Keeping records for the above
11. Relevant theory.
12. Predator problems and control of predators.
13. Beach surveys.
14. Dealing with visitors and tourists.

There is no fixed timetable subsequent to the briefing as the training follows the project work, which was dictated by its needs - the availability of circumstances, for example for tagging and measuring nesting females, were taken advantage of. The working language is English.

The course is run by the Cyprus Wildlife Society (CWS) in cooperation with the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research. The trainees are mainly accommodated in tents at the Lara Turtle Station. Food is provided at the Station or by the CWS elsewhere. The course entailed walking the beaches at night and during the day for turtles nests and nesting. The trainees work with the staff of the Department and the CWS on the project. They are trained in all aspects of the project as outlined above. The training as always is a "hands-on" type of training not a theoretical course - theoretical issues were covered as needed.

The course is successful and the participants are always well motivated as they were already working on turtle conservation in their respective countries and it is believed that they picked up the relevant techniques, in which they got hand-on practical experience.