

# Bonaire's Turtle Protection Laws

The nests and eggs of sea turtles have been protected on Bonaire since 1961 in the island legislation “Eilandsverordening tot Bescherming van de Zeeschildpadden en Kreeften.” Full protection to all life stages was conferred in 1991 when the Island Council of Bonaire amended the Marine Environmental Ordinance (A.B. 1984, no 21):

Text of “Verordening Marien Milieu A.B 1991 Nr.8,” the Marine Environment Ordinance

## Article 14

1. It is prohibited to disturb or destroy sea turtle nests or to remove eggs from the nests; it is prohibited to be in possession of, to have for sale or delivery, to offer for sale, to sell, to buy, to trade in, to donate or to transport eggs of sea turtles.
2. It is prohibited to kill, catch or be in possession of sea turtles.
3. It is prohibited to offer for sale, sell, buy, trade in, donate, or offer as a dish in any way in public, sea turtles, sea turtle meat or other products of sea turtles.
4. Sea turtles are understood to comprise the following species: *Chelonia mydas* (Tortuga blanku), *Caretta caretta* (Kawama), *Eretmochelys imbricata* (Karet), *Dermochelys coriacea* (Drikil), and *Lepidochelys kempi*.
5. The prohibition as meant in paragraph 2 can be suspended for periods of up to one year (renewable as necessary), after a hearing by the Marine Environment Commission and provided that the condition of the sea turtle population permits such a measure. This action would be administered through an Executive Council decree, which would provide regulations for the catch of sea turtles, the species, the season, quota, and minimum and maximum sizes.

**The penalty for violation of the new law in Bonaire is a maximum of NAf. 5000 and/or one month in jail; relevant equipment (spear gun, car, boat) can be confiscated.**

*Update on penalties: As of October 10, 2010, when Bonaire became a special municipality of the Netherlands, the penalty for violating laws that relate to species listed under Article 8 of the SPAW Protocol may result in a maximum fine of US \$560,000.*