

EPISKOPI TURTLEWATCH

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO MEMBERS

15 NOVEMBER 2008



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I SUMMARY OF THE 2008 SEASON

Results

101. 2008 has been a year of mixed fortunes for Episkopi Turtlewatch. In many respects the nesting activity has been overshadowed by the number of dead turtles washed up on our beaches, abuse of the nesting beaches and nest vandalism. Not all of the casualties will have been from our breeding stock but there is no doubt that a significant (and possibly irreversible) level of damage has been inflicted.
102. Despite all this, by some miracle, several turtles did nest with us and importantly the nests laid included one from a green turtle which was the first on our beaches for ten years. Our number of active volunteers continues to increase despite the loss of several families who were part of the battalion which left the island partway through the season.
103. We have had 5 nests (2007 – 12) from which 206 (2007 – 589) hatchlings have made their way to the sea (paragraph 214). Whilst this is disappointing relative to both 2007 and 2006 results it remains above the average results for the past 10 years.
104. On the downside, 16 dead turtles have been washed onto our beaches, almost three times as many as in 2007, our previous worst year. The casualties were mainly the victims of entanglement in fishing nets or long lines (paragraph 118). Two exhausted turtles were also reported to us. These were allowed to rest and safely returned to the sea.

Volunteers

105. Once again we are extremely happy to report that our volunteer numbers have increased. We now have 120 family groups of volunteers, compared with 97 at the start of the season and just 13 individuals in 2005 when Linda and David took over the co-ordinator role (paragraph 301). Success in recruiting volunteers has allowed us to maintain a full schedule of beach walks and night vigils. It also enabled us to conduct a much larger and more effective beach clean up campaign than has ever been undertaken by Turtlewatch previously.
106. Our volunteer base is comprised of a good mix of military personnel, SBAA personnel and non-military permanent residents of Cyprus. Our membership also encompasses several nationalities. This diversification has benefits both in terms of continuity and in terms of the skill sets available to help support the work of the group.

Communication and external relations

107. An important factor in our success in attracting, retaining and motivating volunteers has been our emphasis on communication. We have kept volunteers fully informed of developments via email and direct contact. We have also set up a new Internet photo sharing facility and a new website is currently being developed by one of our volunteers. We have given talks to local schools and interest groups both to attract volunteers and increase awareness of the need for responsible use of beaches.
108. All this and our presence at public events throughout the year have helped with recruitment. We have maintained our good relationship with Andreas Demetropoulos of the Lara turtle conservation project and have kept the SBAA Environment Service informed of our activities. We have also now forged links with MEDASSET and with

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Exeter University, which manages the turtle conservation project on the north of the island. We also continue our membership of Seaturtle and attended both meetings of the newly formed SBA conservation group.

109. Importantly, particularly in the current circumstances, we also now have a strong working relationship with the SBA Police which has allocated a dedicated officer, PC Andreas Stylianou, to Turtlewatch.
110. We have continued to receive positive coverage in the local and the international press and in various conservation magazines. At the request of Project AWARE and the Marine Conservation society some of our photographs will be featuring in their publicity and campaign literature.
111. Throughout the year we have received outstanding support from BFBS radio at both local and international level. We also featured on the flagship programme BFBS reports.
112. During the year we have distributed a large volume of educational material in the form of pamphlets and DVDs and with the assistance of PADI International made presentations on turtle conservation in Cyprus to all dive centre operators on the island.
113. We have also worked with Louis Cruises to ensure that balloon releases no longer form any part of their onboard activities.
114. We have continued to enjoy strong support from Lemmings Kite Surfer club, the ISYC and Marty Ansfield's team at Tunnel Beach.

Finance

115. In terms of our 'hands on' conservation activities finance is not a great issue since our volunteers and we contribute our own transportation and other resources at our own cost, without any reimbursement. Funds that we are able to raise are applied either to awareness raising activities such as brochures and display materials or directly to conservation activities (eg clean up and fencing materials). During the year we have undertaken various fund-raising activities. We have also worked with the SBA environment team to secure funding to apply towards erecting permanent vehicle barriers on Long Beach and an information station on Curium Beach. However, based on the initial contractor estimates there is some concern that available budget is inadequate to fully complete both tasks. We are therefore exploring other funding avenues and would welcome any suggestions that our members can give us.

Licensing and training

116. During the year a new Licensing system was introduced to the SBA. We successfully applied for Licenses for the existing co-ordinators and two other committee members who had previously completed nest location training at the Lara project. Next year we intend to add the two other committee members to the application following appropriate training with Andreas Demetropoulos.

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Issues to be resolved

117. The most important issue facing us is the issue of illegal fishing near our nesting beaches. During the year we witnessed an obscene number of deaths caused by this activity. On several occasions complete beaches were netted off resulting not only in adult deaths but also, we suspect, in the dumping of eggs at seas by turtles that were unable to access their nesting beach. The SBA authorities were alerted to this potential problem well before the beginning of the season and it was disappointing to note that despite our regular reporting to the environment department throughout 2008 both it and the SBAA were slow to recognise the severity of the situation. As a consequence of this we formally requested that the Chief Officer use his powers under the law to suspend all fishing activity during the remainder of the season. The request was refused but did at least raise the 'profile' of the problem and there is now a commitment for all interested parties to work together to prevent a repetition.
118. During the early part of the season there was a failure on the part of the SBA police to protect our beaches from late night abuse and from vehicle abuse. Following the personal intervention of Chief Superintendent Hall and the activities of the police following this, and assuming that permanent barriers are erected at Long Beach we are optimistic that the situation can be radically improved in 2009.
119. To a certain extent we have become victims of our own success and as a result funding has for the first time become an important issue. The volume of information and conservation material distributed by us has increased significantly and consequently so has the cost of producing it. The cost of bags, gloves and similar items for our clean ups has also increased because of the increase in the number of cleanups we have undertaken, on top of which there is a constant need to repair and replace our operational equipment! In order to fund our basic activities alone we need to increase the effectiveness of our fund raising activities. In order to undertake larger one off projects such as permanent information stands on our beaches we need to look at new sources of funds.

Plans for 2009

120. Assuming that we continue in our current roles, we plan to continue with the emphasis on communication in order to further strengthen our team of volunteers and to increase awareness in the community of the importance of the turtles and the need for their conservation.
121. As noted above, we intend to reapply for licenses for the existing holders and to extend the application to include two other committee members after they have received appropriate training.

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122. We shall work closely with the SBA police and environment departments and the Republic of Cyprus Fisheries Department to:
- a. Educate local fishermen about turtle conservation
 - b. Ensure that fishing and foreshore regulations are publicised and enforced
 - c. Produce a beach patrol plan prior to the start of the 2009 mating and nesting season
 - d. Produce educational materials and programmes for a variety of target audiences
123. We shall do our utmost to repeat and expand on the pre-season beach cleanup programme and continue to press for improvements in the numbers, placing and emptying of rubbish bins.
124. We shall continue our work with the SBA environment department to ensure that permanent vehicle barriers are installed on Long Beach well ahead of the start of the 2009 season.
125. With the assistance of one of our volunteers we will endeavour to have a new reliable website in action early in 2009.
126. We shall explore new funding avenues. An application for grant aid towards our clean up and publicity costs will be submitted to Project AWARE for consideration at its January meeting.

Conclusion

127. Following record activity levels of nesting 2006 and 2007 it was deeply upsetting for all of us to have a record season for the wrong reasons in 2008. Contrary to expectations, however, we were pleasantly surprised to have some nests and the fact that they included a successful green turtle nest was thrilling. The scale and success of our clean ups was very rewarding and once again reflects the hard work and commitment of the volunteer group. It has been a privilege for us to work with so many committed people and we cannot overstate our gratitude to you, the volunteers, for your dedication and support throughout the year.
128. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the end of season get together and thank those of you who are unable to attend for the many kind emails that you have sent.
129. As ever, we should welcome your suggestions and your involvement. If there are any areas where you think we could do things better, or if you have time to increase your own involvement, please let us know.

II RESULTS FOR 2008

201. The season got off to an unprecedentedly early start with our first nest being found on Lemmings beach on 20 May, well ahead of our normal 1 June start date for patrolling. Fortunately we had a suspicion that an unusual season was likely and managed to press gang a few volunteers into an early start! Unlike the previous two years the season was a short one. Our final nest was laid on 14 July and we had very few crawls after that date. This provided a sharp contrast with 2007 when our final excavation took place on 11 October. It was a pattern which was reflected across the Mediterranean. Four of our nests were laid by loggerhead turtles. One was laid by a green turtle, our first of this type in ten years although we did have some green turtle tracks in both 2006 and 2007.
202. All our nesting in 2008 took place within Happy Valley with Lemmings the beach of choice. This was initially surprising as it was previously our least successful venue! As the season unwound, however, it became apparent that there were sound and rather depressing reasons for our other beaches being largely ignored. These are familiar to the old hands amongst our volunteers but are outlined below for the sake of new members and for the record.
- Curium Beach**
203. In both 2006 and 2007 three nests were laid on the sandy part of this beach close to the tavernas. This came as a pleasant surprise given the busy nature of the beach. We had, however, worked closely with the taverna owners to ensure that they switched off all lights at closing time and did not rake the beaches until after we had checked them in the morning. This paid dividends and they were as excited as we were about the nests.
204. This year in the period up to 15 June there were a large number of trial crawls and unsuccessful nesting attempts. The main reason for the failure to nest at that time was attributable to the fact that over the preceding winter and spring large quantities of sand had been removed from the beach both by man and by nature. The areas of beach with sand deep enough to support nesting were few and the exploring turtles needed luck to find them. From 15 June we had virtually nil activity on Curium. The reasons for this quickly became obvious as many of us witnessed that the beach had become a venue for frequent and brightly lit all night parties. Added to this people had also started to camp overnight on it in precisely the areas that would support nesting.
205. With your help we produced a wealth of evidence that the abuse was occurring and a number of high level meetings were held with the SBA police and Environment departments. It became apparent that there was a lack of understanding of the nesting habits of turtles and problems linked to them. With the personal support of Chief Superintendent Peter Hall we are actively addressing this and indeed the positive effects of this were beginning to feed through in the manner in which patrols of all our beaches were conducted from August. Unfortunately nesting attempts on all beaches had stopped by then but the commitment of the police to the project was evident in the manner they thoroughly investigated the interference that took place

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with our green turtle nest. We are cautiously optimistic that 2009 will see Curium restored as a nesting beach.

Long Beach

206. We actually had a steady number of crawls and nesting attempts throughout the season on Long beach. Some of these were clearly the work of young and inexperienced turtles which will hopefully nest in future years. However, on at least two occasions fully formed nesting chambers were abandoned. This generally only happens if the female is disturbed and sufficiently frightened to flee. The disturbance could be human or animal. However, the evidence appears to indicate that the beach was (as in 2006 and early 2007) subject to significant human abuse with evidence of repeated overnight camping taking place.
207. Additionally the problem of vehicle abuse on the beach again reared its head. In 2007 we had worked with the local village and the SBA and military to block off vehicle access points to the beach. During the winter of 2007 the barriers were removed and the beach has been used extensively and illegally by buggy drivers in particular. One tour company even featured the beach on its website. We campaigned ceaselessly throughout the year to have the original barriers replaced as a temporary blocking measure whilst funding for a more permanent solution was found. Unfortunately the gaps remained open throughout the season and indeed more gaps were also made. The result was that large areas of sand were severely compacted making it difficult for the turtles to dig and, in some instances turtle tracks were obliterated before they could be properly checked for nesting.
208. On a positive note the Environment department has now obtained grant finance of £7,000 which it intends to apply in part to erecting permanent barriers at Long beach. We have joined in with the meetings with the contracted engineers to help devise a solution and barriers should be in place in all the major gaps well before the start of the next nesting season. However, cost estimates received are that each barrier will cost up to £2,000. This represents a reduction on the first estimate by a factor of 75% thanks to our intervention. Unfortunately, cost negotiations are not in our hands.
209. We are also optimistic that better targeting of police patrols will assist next year's nesting efforts.

Tunnel Beach

210. The lack of nesting or even crawl activity on Tunnel for most of this season came as a complete shock to us. It is usually the most popular beach because it is so quiet at night and this year it was in excellent condition thanks in no small part to the work undertaken by the watersports team to remove a breakwater and to introduce regular litter patrols. At first we linked it to the death of so many adult turtles and assumed that those which would normally nest on Tunnel were amongst the dead. However, we and you began to gather information that suggested something even more worrying was taking place.

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211. Thanks to two early morning walkers in particular we established that the entire beach was being netted off illegally in depths of less than 5 metres several times a week. Any turtle trying to come ashore would have been unable to do so. Some may have also found themselves entangled in the net itself and drowned.
212. Such netting had been observed at the end of the 2007 season and had been brought to the attention of the police and the SBAA at that time. We raised this specific issue and the general issue of illegal fishing during the nesting with the responsible authorities early in 2008 and repeatedly thereafter. Alongside this the death toll of turtles washing up on our beaches was rising at an alarming rate. The environment department was fully appraised of the seriousness of the situation but appeared not to recognise the significance of the deaths until we escalated the issue by writing to the then Chief Officer requesting him to exercise his powers under existing legislation and introduce a moratorium on fishing in shallow waters off our beaches. This was refused but did at least galvanise the SBAA into taking our protests seriously and as a result Police, Customs and Environment officials were mandated to address the issue of enforcing the fishing legislation that currently exists.
213. However, we are obliged to note that despite the provision of photographic evidence, positive identification of the boat and eye witness accounts no action was taken against the principal culprit. The explanation is that it is not possible to prove that the nets were in less than 5m of water although the boat was virtually on the beach. It also appears that no action has been taken in respect of the boat's failure to display a registered number as required by the Fisheries Law.
214. One particularly disturbing feature of the year was that an attempt was made to dig up our green turtle nest shortly before it was due to hatch. Fortunately the perpetrators were unable to locate the egg chamber, but regrettably the disturbance caused to the chamber by their actions meant that a large number of hatchlings were starved of oxygen and died in the nest. The attempted theft took place after we had begun to forge a new working relationship with the SBA police and we were extremely gratified by the efforts they made to apprehend the perpetrators and discourage any repeat of the incident.
215. A summary of nests is set out below.

Episkopi Turtlewatch results 2008

Nest	Location	Laid	Hatched	Days	Total					LS	Total eggs	Success
					N1-5	N6-10 hatchlings	DIN	ES	LS			
1 LH	Lemmings W	20-May	18-Jul	59	19	14	33	4	32	0	69	48%
2 LH	Lemmings W	05-Jun	24-Jul	49	60	10	70	6	8	10	94	74%
3 LH	Tunnel W	07-Jul	17-Aug	41	35	0	35		2		54	65%
4 G	Lemmings W	10-Jul	26-Aug	47	56	0	56	16	12	6	90	62%
5 LH	Tunnel E	14-Jul	27-Aug	44	6	6	12	1	70	5	88	14%
Total					206						395	52%

Notes

- a) Nest 4 was disturbed by human attempt to dig up during week prior to hatching.
- b) Nest 3 had been relocated. It was predated after first night of successful hatching. The cage had been moved

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216. There is a wide variation in number of eggs and the success rate (hatchlings as a percentage of total eggs) and no clear correlation between the two. We believe that the same turtle accounted for nests 1 and 2. The variation in the success rate between these is probably due to the second nest benefitting from a warmer sand temperature.
217. The success rate of nest 4, the green turtle nest, was in line with our average loggerhead success rate and significantly ahead of the records we have for the greens that nested 10 years ago. The rate would have been nearer 80% had the nest not been vandalised.
218. Nest 3 was laid so close to the sea that it was almost submerged when we found it. We believe that the mother was probably exhausted by attempts to come ashore at the eastern end of Tunnel which had been netted off illegally. She probably lacked the energy to get up the ISYC beach and just got rid of her eggs as soon as she could. The nest was successfully relocated but unfortunately the position of the cage was interfered with so that it was no longer protected from predation. A successful first night of hatching attracted a fox which finished off the stragglers. Despite this it was still a good result.
219. Nest 5 was a disappointment. Unfortunately, despite it being positioned a reasonable way up the beach water seeped into it from below, a problem which unfortunately could not be detected until we excavated the nest.
220. A summary of results over the past eleven years is given below.

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatched	% success
2008	5	395	206	52.15 *
2007	12	937	589	62.86 +
2006	13	1069	806	75.40 ++
2005	2	121	101	83.47
2004	6	539	319	59.18
2003	3	198	143	72.22
2002	1	78	74	94.87
2001	2	146	103	70.55
1999	3	302	159	52.65
1998	10	827	489	59.13
	57	4612	2989	64.81

- + One nest removed, one nest interfered with
 ++ One nest removed
 * Two nests interfered with

221. In line with the terms of our 2008 licences we were required to allow nests to hatch naturally for 10 nights before being excavated. An exception to this was the green turtle nest, which, after consultation with Andreas Demetropoulos, we excavated after four nights because of the danger of a second attempt to attack the nest. We were also concerned that the condition of the emerging hatchlings indicated that the original attack had harmed the chamber as proved to be the case.

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222. As noted above illegal laying of fishing nets and long lines off our beaches reached unacceptable levels in 2008. This coincided with a clampdown on illegal fishing activities in the Republic of Cyprus and a withdrawal of sports fishing licenses (the right for amateurs to fish with nets). SBA Customs officials informed us that they believed that this had had the effect of displacing both sports fishermen and illegal fishing activities into our waters, which they lacked the resources to fully police.
223. In last year's report we noted an increase in the number of dead turtles washing up on our beaches. We feared that the problem might worsen in 2008 but were totally unprepared for the level of carnage we witnessed. So far in 2008 we have discovered 16 dead turtles compared with a previous high in 2007 of six dead and two injured. Between them the other 3 SBA turtle groups have recorded at least 18 deaths. Our deaths alone included 8 breeding age females which between them could be expected to produce an average of 16 nests every 2-3 years. Conversely the number of deaths reported in the Republic of Cyprus, which has a much greater nesting population than the SBA, has reduced.
224. We have had the distressing task of measuring, photographing and arranging for the disposal of the turtles and submitted the relevant data to both the SBA Environment Office and the Cyprus Fisheries Department. All the turtles apart from one which had become trapped in a plastic chair appear to have drowned following entrapment in nets used for fishing. We have via Seaturtle.org contacted every other conservation body involved with turtle conservation to see if they have experienced an uplift in their mortality rate and also to gain input from them as to the probable cause of our deaths. From the numerous responses we received it was apparent that ours was an isolated problem and that fishing activities were the probable cause.
225. For this reason we continue to press the SBA to enforce the existing fishing regulations and to use existing provisions within them to extend the time period during which net fishing in less than 5m is banned. The current restrictions apply only between 1 June and 30 September. As we have seen in this and in previous years the season often extends beyond this and we believe that a ban from 15 May until 31 October would be more appropriate.
226. Since the fishing regulations of the SBA are supposed to mirror those of the Republic of Cyprus we shall also be formally requesting that the SBA ceases to issue sports fishing licenses.

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227. With the help of our dedicated police officer we will be liaising with the Police Maritime division, the Cyprus Fisheries department, SBA customs, SBA Environment and Area office to implement a three pronged plan to improve the fishing situation which will include;
- a. Proper checking of fishing vessels to ensure that they are properly registered and that their equipment is legal;
 - b. Meetings with local fishermen to ensure that they fully understand the existing legislation;
 - c. Educational programmes including ones specifically targeted at fishermen and a joint media campaign.
228. The will now finally appears to exist to tackle this problem. We now hope that this translates into action and we will do everything within our power to ensure that it does. A repeat of this year's events cannot be tolerated.

III VOLUNTEERS

301. Volunteers are the lifeblood of Turtlewatch and every year your level of contribution humbles us. We started the year with a healthy level of 97 “family groups” (which could be anything from an individual to parents and two or three children) and ended with 120. There is a constant “churn” as a result of military personnel being posted away from Cyprus and this is one of the reasons underlying our diversification strategy.
302. Our season started with a programme of clean-up activity on a scale which we have never previously dared attempt. The headline grabbers were the two massive cleans of Curium Beach during May when on each occasion at least 80 people turned out. BFBS and Coast FM were a great help in publicising both events.
303. As if this wasn’t enough many of you also rolled up your sleeves and helped us with several smaller cleans on the Akrotiri beaches.
304. Thanks to the cooperation of the Environment department and Episkopi council all rubbish gathered at each clean was quickly removed for proper disposal.
305. The official pre-season get-together was held at St Ermogenis immediately following the second Curium Clean and was our best attended ever. It’s amazing what people will do if you offer them a cut price meal! It’s just as well as it allowed us to press gang some of you to starting your beach patrols early.
306. Between all of us we have carried out more than 400 beach walks. There have been no missed beach walks and no gaps in the night vigil schedule. This demonstrates the commitment shown by our volunteers, some of whom travel long distances to help us. All of us bear our own travel expenses and provide whatever is needed for night vigils.
307. We introduced a new system of deputy coordinators who each took responsibility for a beach. In 2009 we will continue with this strategy of training volunteers in identifying, locating and excavating nests in order to provide backup and continuity to the project.
308. We have a very enjoyable end of season event planned at the Paramali Balti on 16 November which looks likely to be well attended..

IV COMMUNICATIONS

401. The website <http://groups.msn.com/episkopiturtlewatch> is an excellent way of keeping existing volunteers abreast of developments and of attracting new volunteers. The website does not just benefit Episkopi Turtlewatch: a number of people have contacted us via the website asking for information on how to get in touch with Akrotiri and Dhekelia in order to volunteer and we have passed on the necessary details.
402. Unfortunately the current website hosting arrangement has proved increasingly unreliable and no longer meets our needs. We now have a volunteer who is willing to build us a new more robust site and we hope to put this in place over the coming winter.
403. During the year we were able to use Flickr to set up a new Internet photo sharing service which we used to post photographs of tracks, nests, excavations and hatchlings. It is a useful training tool and also a lot of fun! If you would like some of your pictures posting please email them to us.
404. We have sent regular updating reports to our volunteers, with copies to the SBAA Environment Service, the Pissouri, Dhekelia and Akrotiri coordinators and, via Andreas Demetropoulos, the Cyprus Fisheries Department. We have also attended wider forums such as the SBA conservation group meetings.
405. In order to raise awareness of turtle conservation and to recruit volunteers we have given talks to a couple of local interest groups and presented to all diving centre operations on the island. If anyone has any connection with a group or a school that would be interested in hearing about Episkopi Turtlewatch we should be delighted to talk to them.
406. During the year we also obtained a variety of educational publications and DVDs from MEDASSET in both Greek and English which we distributed widely.
407. The Episkopi Hive has kindly continued to publicise our activities.
408. BFBS both internationally and locally proved to be a valuable ally throughout the year. Interviews with Turtlewatch featured on several radio shows and the problem of illegal fishing was highlighted in the flagship television programme BFBS reports. We have again received valuable press coverage in the Cyprus press, the Cyprus Lion and the Army Families Journal. We also had significant contact with both the Marine Conservation Society and Project AWARE, both of which have asked to use our photographs to highlight the problems caused by litter and the plight of sea turtles in general. This all helps raise awareness of turtle conservation and recruit volunteers.
409. Following a concern raised by one of our longstanding members we contacted Louis Cruise lines to highlight the problems that balloon releases cause to marine life. They responded very positively to both Turtlewatch and to the individual volunteer and have now introduced a policy of allowing no balloon releases at all from their vessels.
- 410.** We have had much improved communications with the SBA Police and look forward to a fruitful working relationship with them in 2009.

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V FINANCE

501. Our volunteers and we meet our own expenses, so day to day operations are self-financing. Any funds that we are able to raise are applied directly to conservation and awareness raising activities. These include the beach clean ups, display stands, website hosting fees, production of educational leaflets and nest protection.
502. A financial statement for the year to date is set out below, showing a surplus of Euro 55 and accumulated funds of Euro 1050 in hand.

	€	€
Income		
T shirt sales	323	
Share of WSBA fund	510	
Other fete income	<u>267</u>	
Total income		1100
Cost of sales		
41 shirts at €4.70	193	
Fete stall fees and bran tub	<u>106</u>	
		<u>299</u>
Gross profit		801
Other expenditure		
Leaflets and DVDs	334	
Clean up materials	205	
Repairs and equipment	160	
Sundry	27	
Bank charges	<u>10</u>	
Total		<u>736</u>
Surplus for year		<u><u>65</u></u>
STATEMENT OF FUNDS		
Cash at bank and in hand		728
T shirt stock		<u>332</u>
		1050
Opening balance		<u>985</u>
Surplus for year		<u><u>65</u></u>

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503. While minimal funds will be needed to finance day-to-day activities, we shall need funds over the next few months for nest signs, cages and clean up materials. We will apply for grants (eg from PADI Project AWARE) for larger scale educational projects such as the production of permanent information displays on our beaches.
504. As the scale of our organisation increases so does the demand for information leaflets, display materials and clean up materials. If you have any suggestions for financing this or contacts that may be able to help please do let us know.

VI TRAINING

601. Under the new Wildlife Ordinance introduced in the SBA at the end of 2007 Turtlewatch is no longer granted an operating License at group level. Licenses to locate and cage nests, handle any turtle and conduct excavations are now issued on an individual named person basis. Licenses are granted on an annual basis to applicants deemed to have the necessary level of training and experience.
602. In order to identify and locate nests, and to excavate nests and move them if necessary, individuals must amongst other requirements undertake training at Lara with Andreas Demetropoulos (or complete an equivalent training course). Our current coordinators have trained regularly at Lara since 2005 and in 2007 were able to include other members of the current committee in this. Consequently we were successful in obtaining licenses for 4 of our team in 2008. In 2009 subject to Mr Demetropoulos's agreement we intend to continue our training and extend it to a further two of our existing beach supervisors in order that they can also become licensed.
603. During the season we continued with our policy of attempting to increase the knowledge of our volunteers by leaving tracks in situ so that they could be seen by as many of them as possible. We shall continue with this practice in 2009 although if we experience nest tampering again we may regrettably have to review this policy. We are however hopeful that the new patrols to be introduced by the police and the environment wardens will act as a successful deterrent to vandalism.
604. This season, in order to increase the knowledge of our volunteers we posted photographs of all stages of our activities on a new photo site. We had also hoped to have a new website up and running. Sadly this has been difficult to achieve in 2008 but we are optimistic that we can rectify this situation in 2009.

VII ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

701. The overwhelming issue to be resolved is that of effective policing of fishing activities in our waters. An action plan supported by the SBA police and the SBA environment department is currently being drawn up. This will assign specific responsibilities to both departments and individuals.
702. As noted earlier, we have succeeded in obtaining funding to restrict vehicle access to Long Beach but there are still major issues such as misuse of the beaches, particularly after dark, illegal fishing nets and, sadly, interference with nests. We are now satisfied that the Police and Environment department are taking these issues seriously and a number of positive steps have been taken. These include a meeting to be held in April next year between all involved parties to agree a strategy aimed at preventing various abuses rather than simply reacting to them. A number of joint patrol initiatives are also to be undertaken and a dedicated officer has been allocated to issues relating to Turtlewatch concerns.
703. Due to the public nature of Curium Beach and the difficulty of blocking vehicle access to it we believe that our best hope of preventing abuse is a combined strategy of effective policing and public awareness raising. Plans have been put in place to achieve this.
704. We will be monitoring all these issues closely in 2009 to ensure that appropriate progress is achieved.
705. If anyone is able to offer help or suggestions on these issues we should be delighted to hear from them.

VIII PLANS FOR 2009

801. Our main focus for 2009 will be to ensure that we do not suffer the same level of casualties and obstacles to nesting as this year. We shall monitor the level of casualties and monitor progress on tackling illegal fishing and abuse of nesting beaches. We shall also:

- Extend training in nest location to more volunteers in order to provide backup and continuity (paragraph 603);
- Obtain finance for and erect information displays on our beaches (paragraph 503)
- Carry on our successful beach cleanup programme (paragraph 302).