

## Turtle Conservation In Sri Lanka – Kosgoda Hatchery



### Turtle Watching In Sri Lanka

Five out of the seven species of sea turtles come ashore to nest in **Sri Lanka**, making it an ideal country to go **Turtle Watching**. They are the **Green Turtle**, **Leatherback**, **Hawksbill**, **Loggerhead** and the **Olive Ridley**. All 5 species have been recorded to nest along specific areas of **Sri Lanka's** coast. The months between **January** and **July** are the peak laying season.

### Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

An extent of 4 kilometers of the **Kosgoda Beach** has become very special due to the fact that five species of turtles out of the eight species facing extinction in the world frequent this beach annually for nesting purposes. Annually, 67% of eggs in the **Kosgoda Beach** are eaten, collected or sold by the locals.

The **Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery** started in 1981 with a grant from the **Hasselblad Camera Company**. The hatchery is a non-profit conservation project that employs many locals and has become a very popular excursion for visitors to the beach resort of **Bentota**, a few kilometers to the north.

The hatchery aims to prevent predators from marauding the nests or catching the hatchlings. Eggs are retrieved from the nests and reburied in a sandy enclosure completely covered by netting. At the point of emergence, hatchlings are transferred to tanks of sea-water to be fattened for a few days before being released directly into the sea.



Baby Hatchlings



Turtle Eggs Buried For Hatching

#### Visiting The Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

Visitors are shown the huge tanks filled with new born but lively hatchlings. After being fed the hatchlings are taken to the sea and released when they are 2-4 days old. They are not always released during the safer hours of darkness. Although **October** to **April** is the main laying season, some eggs can be found at **Kosgoda** throughout the year.

In **Sri Lanka** there are 18 hatcheries found along the southern coast. According to some statistics from 1996 to 1999 about 98,198 sea turtles were hatched and released to the sea from these hatcheries.



Large Turtle In Artificial Tank



Hatchling Released To The Sea