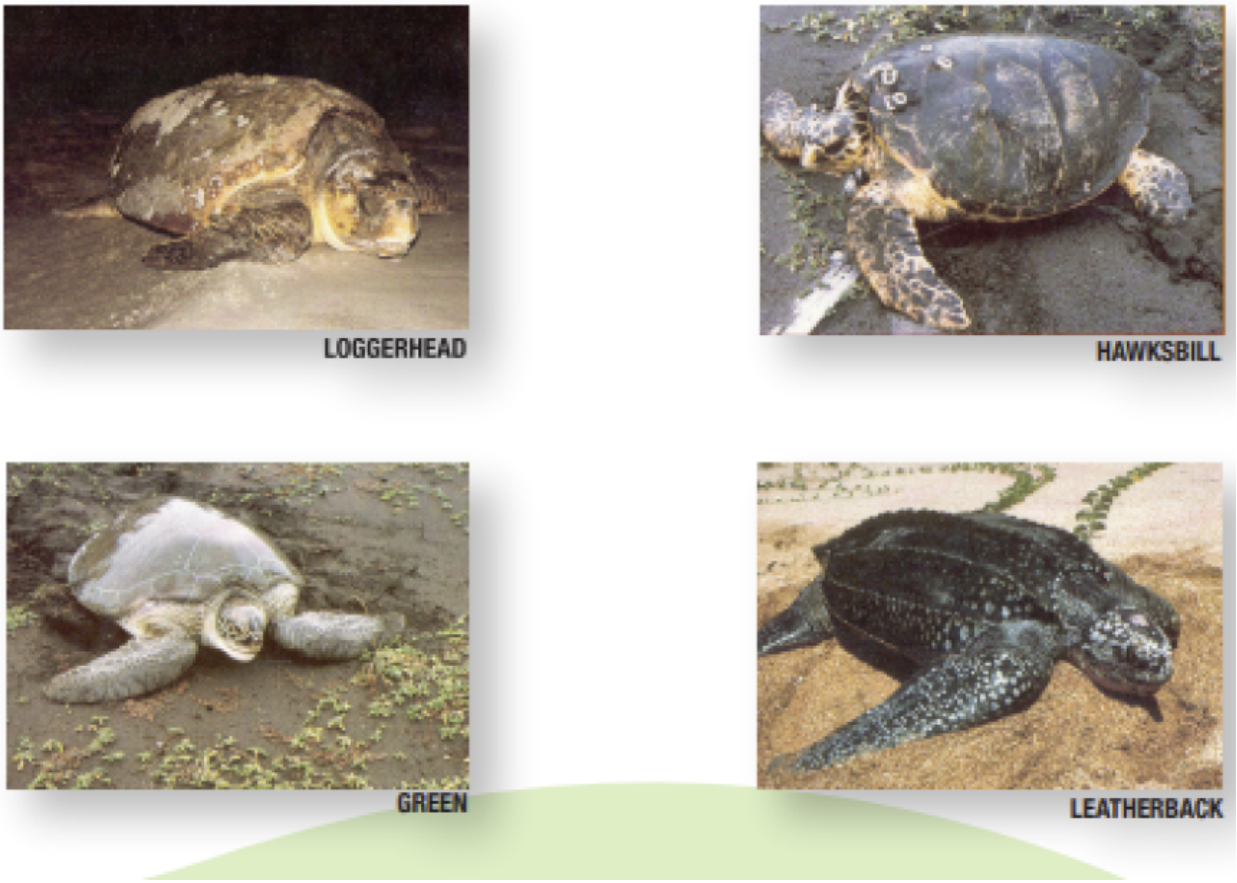
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
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Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Announces Closed Season for Sea Turtles

Release Date: 7 April, 2026



The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is informing all fishers, vendors, and the public that the annual closed season for sea turtles is now in effect.

The closed season runs from 1-2 April and 7 April to 30 November 2026.

The protections apply to the Green Turtle (Chelonia mydas) and Hawksbill Turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata). Additionally, a full moratorium remains in place for the Leatherback Turtle (Dermochelys coriacea) and Loggerhead Turtle (Caretta caretta).

During the closed season, the following activities are strictly prohibited:

- Fishing for or capturing any turtle
- Removing any turtle from fishery waters
- Possessing any turtle or part of a turtle at any time
- Exposing for sale, selling, or purchasing any turtle

These restrictions apply to all persons, vessels, vehicles, and premises.

Director of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Theodore E James, emphasised the importance of compliance, stating, *“These measures are critical to protecting our vulnerable turtle populations and ensuring their recovery for future generations. We urge everyone to respect the closed season and play their part in conserving our marine resources.”*

For the purpose of enforcement, “turtle” refers to the whole or any part of a turtle. Non-compliance may result in enforcement action under applicable laws.

Members of the public are encouraged to report any violations to the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force at 284-800-8477 (TIPS) or 284-368-9339.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries thanks the public for their cooperation in supporting the protection and sustainability of the Territory’s marine life.

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About:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for ensuring that food is safe, nutritionally sound, produced and harvested in an environmentally sustainable manner that builds resilience to internal and external shocks, while contributing to the economic growth, social well-being and the protection of the natural environment.

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