



OUR TURTLES



The Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE) project sponsored a clean up event at Karpaz Golden Beach as part of the Sea Turtle Protection Project. This project is run by environmental protection department with SAVE's assistance to build local capacity on marine habitat protection and raise public awareness.

The clean up event took place on 31 May with the participation of about 100 students and their teachers from the local secondary school. SAVE fully sponsored the event, including logistics, health support, refreshments, hats, t-shirts, stickers and brochures.

The overall aim of this clean up event was to;

- Protect the endangered species of sea turtles which is important for Mediterranean and whole of the world
- Protect nesting area of sea turtles
- Educate the local community and raise awareness about nature and nature protection



Hundreds of pairs of gloves and bin bags were used to clean the almost 5 miles long coast line. 73 bags of solid waste including, remains of plastics, ropes, woods, cans, etc. were collected.

The green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) are known to breed regularly in the Mediterranean. With their miles of golden sands Karpaz Peninsula beaches are ideal for these endangered species. However, nesting numbers historically have been low. Most sea turtle populations are depleted and no remaining substantial populations have been adequately protected yet.

Humans have the potential to disturb nesting marine turtles. People walking through nesting sites, large pieces of solid waste, such as pallets or large lengths of timber on nesting beaches may act as barriers to nesting turtles. Washed up plastic refuse and other non-degradable substances, deter some hatchlings from reaching the ocean. Therefore, as one of the key hatching spots of *Caretta Caretta* Turtles, Golden Beach at Kapraz was cleaned up with support of local secondary school students and teachers.



This lovely picture of the Clean Kapraz Coast shows how much can be accomplished when people are committed to achieving something positive for their environment.



No matter how harmless it may seem trash on the beach is a big reason for losing our sea turtles. We hope that through our public education and outreach activities just like this clean up event we gain more friends for our turtles.

SAVE works to build local capacity to better protect and manage Cyprus' valuable natural and cultural resources. SAVE combines work on environmental protection, especially water management, with cultural heritage conservation, preservation, and restoration. Like all U.S.-funded programs in Cyprus, SAVE is aimed at improving the conditions that will foster a durable Cyprus settlement.