

seaturtle.org : [MTN](#) : [ARCHIVES](#) : [INDEX](#)

Marine Turtle Newsletter 57:21-22, © 1992

Marine Turtle Newsletter

Sea Turtles Stimulate Environmental Education in Greece

Anna Kremezi-Margaritouli

The Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece, Solomou 35, GR-106 82 Athens, Greece

In 1985 the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece (STPS) made a first attempt to present the plight of the sea turtle in the schools of Zakynthos, Greece. The results were very promising in that the children were impressed by the issue, and their positive response was evident in several instances. In 1986, on the occasion of the European Year for the Environment, the STPS launched an educational program under the auspices of the Ministry of Education for all schools in Greece. To this end, the Center for Marine Conservation in Washington D. C. provided permission and financial assistance to translate into Greek and distribute 10,000 copies of its well-known colouring book *SEA TURTLES*. The main objective of this ongoing program is to develop an environmental conscience in the children by using the case of the sea turtle as an illustrative example. To date, about 350 schools have been visited throughout the country and more than 30,000 school children have attended a turtle presentation, with priority given to schools in Zakynthos and other areas hosting nesting turtles.

Each year a letter is distributed to the schools by the Ministry of Education, then interested school administrations make direct contact with STPS to arrange the presentations. Our programs are designed for four age groups: 7-9, 10-12, 13-15, and 16-18 years of age. No more than 80 children are allowed to attend each presentation. A unique approach is used for each age group. The two younger groups usually start their session with some creative games in the playground of the school. This activity acquaints the children with the presenters and prepares a foundation for fruitful cooperation. While children are kept busy outside, other members prepare the classroom (e.g., arranging seating, displaying posters). The presentation consists mainly of a slide show and a video (a different set of slides is shown to each age group) and the talk is followed by a discussion with the children. The whole program lasts about 90 minutes, after which various information materials are distributed. In some cases, painting materials are given to the children of the younger age groups who are encouraged to illustrate the things that impressed them most during the presentation. An exhibition of this artwork is planned for early 1992. Furthermore, a file containing ideas for various follow-up activities is left behind and the children are invited to elaborate on them and to send their work to STPS.

In 1990, the experience accumulated during the five years of this public educational program prompted creation of the "Sea Turtle Briefcase". This is a portable exhibition (four sets of 20-30 slides, a 30-minute video, and a photographic display) with comprehensive instructions for the teacher. The primary purpose of the "Sea Turtle Briefcase" is to reach schools in remote areas. A major advantage of our educational program is that audiovisual material on sea turtles readily attracts the attention of children and thus provides the opportunity to extend discussions and follow-up activities toward other environmental issues. In 1991, the newly created offices on Environmental Education at the prefectural level adopted sea turtles as one of their main issues. The STPS will contribute to their work by providing materials and by instructing teachers.