

## ROYAL RESORTS PARTICIPATES IN THE 2021 SEA TURTLE PROTECTION PROGRAM

Every May, Cancun pioneer resort group Royal Resorts® prepares to welcome its very special summer visitors, the sea turtles that lay their eggs on the beaches in front of its resorts in Cancun, Puerto Morelos and the Riviera Maya.

From May to October, security guards patrol the shoreline at night on the look out for female sea turtles emerging from the waves and they watch over them as they dig their nests. Later in the season, one of nature's greatest spectacles occurs, the newborn baby turtles scuttle across the beach towards the sea.

*The Mexican Caribbean, one of the world's most important turtle nesting areas*

The Mexican Caribbean is an important nesting area for the green (*Chelonia mydas*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtles and also receives occasional visits from the leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the largest and rarest turtle to swim the oceans.

Seven of the world's eight species of sea turtle inhabit Mexican waters and lay their eggs on the nation's beaches. They are protected under Mexican law and it is a criminal offense to persecute and hunt them, steal their eggs, consume their meat or purchase tortoiseshell products such as jewelry or combs.

Every year, female sea turtles emerge from the sea at night to lay their eggs on the beaches of Cancun, the Riviera Maya, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres and other parts of the Mexican Caribbean. The Royal Resorts turtle guardians at The Royal Sands®, and the Royal Islander® in Cancun conduct nightly patrols in search of the turtles that scientists believe return to the beaches they were born on year after year to lay their eggs.

When they come across a turtle, they wait until she has finished digging her nest and has entered into an egg-laying trance before beginning to collect the eggs. They stand guard over her until she covers the nest with sand and returns to the waves, then they move the clutch of eggs to an enclosure where they are protected from the waves, predators such as seabirds and crabs, and the passage of human feet. Each nest is labeled

with the date and time, species of turtle and number of eggs, and members of the sea turtle protection team guard the corral round the clock.

Forty-five to 60 days later, the eggs hatch and staff and local biologists prepare to release the baby turtles after dark. On the count of three, the tiny creatures are set free to scuttle down the beach towards the waves.

To the south of Puerto Morelos, Grand Residences security staff also watch over the turtles in coordination with biologists working for the Municipal government. They report nesting turtles to the biologists on patrol and the nests are tagged and protected.

### *Spreading the message about turtle conservation*

During the sea turtle season, Royal Resorts does all it can to make its guests aware of these very special ocean-going visitors and the need to protect them. A documentary produced by Royal Channel, the in-house TV station, is screened regularly and guests can read nesting season updates on the Royal Resorts blog at [www.royalresorts.com](http://www.royalresorts.com). They learn about the dangers that sea turtles face in the wild from large-scale fishing and pollution to habitat loss, poaching and global warming, among others. They are also told about the nesting season rules, which cover what visitors must and must not do when they come across a female turtle laying its eggs on the beach or when they go snorkeling or diving on local reefs. The rules include watching from a distance of ten meters, not touching the creature and keeping quiet at all times. The use of torches and flash photography to take photos is prohibited. When turtles are startled, they will return to the sea without laying their eggs and the entire clutch of eggs will be lost.

In 2017, Royal Resorts joined the global campaign to reduce the use of plastic straws, a major source of pollution and a danger to sea turtles and other marine creatures. It now uses biodegradable straws in its restaurants and bars, and they are only given if guests expressly request a straw.

### *Royal Resorts is a Cancun turtle conservation pioneer*

Since 1985, Royal Resorts has been protecting the sea turtles that emerge from the sea during the summer to lay their eggs on the beaches of Cancun. It was among the first resort groups to sign up when municipal authorities subsequently launched a conservation

campaign and now participates in the annual statewide turtle program coordinated by SEMARNAT, the Mexican Department of the Environment. Record keeping began in 1998 and, since then, Royal Resorts has protected 9,951 turtle nests and released 925,371 baby turtles. This figure will continue to rise as the 2021 turtle nesting season advances.

### *About Royal Resorts*

Founded in 1975, Royal Resorts® is a pioneer company in the Mexican Caribbean tourism industry. It has three family-friendly beachfront resorts in Cancun: The Royal Cancun®, The Royal Islander® and The Royal Sands® and is set to unveil its latest property Royal Uno® All Inclusive Resort & Spa, in December 2021. At the heart of the Riviera Maya, in Playa del Carmen, The Royal Haciendas® pays tribute to the heritage of the Yucatan with its architectural design and tropical gardens. With magnificent hacienda-inspired architecture in a secluded beach location to the south of Puerto Morelos, Grand Residences Riviera Cancun offers luxury in a tranquil natural setting, only 20 minutes from Cancun and Playa del Carmen for shopping and nightlife.

All the Royal Resorts have spacious rooms and suites equipped with everything guests need for their stay and a wealth of resort amenities for an unforgettable vacation, including daily activities for all ages, kids clubs, non-motorized water sports, pools, gyms and spas and a varied dining scene. [www.royalresorts.com](http://www.royalresorts.com)