



XK Gazette

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Sea Turtle **Tour**

Alex Holis reports on another successful Jaguar event in sunny Greece

September is the best time to visit Greece because the sea has reached its warmest temperature, after the sun has ‘kissed’ the water surface for so many months. First stop, for a chilled ginger lemonade, was the Marina Alimou on the Attica Riviera, where yacht skippers came to take selfies near our Jaguar XKs and E-types.

Since jaguars in nature are an endangered species, we are also sensitive to other animals sharing the same problem and that’s why we decided to visit Archelon – the Sea Turtle Protection Centre in Glyfada near Athens. Our purpose was to learn more about the great job the volunteers are doing in order to rescue and protect these beautiful creatures, which have existed since ancient times.

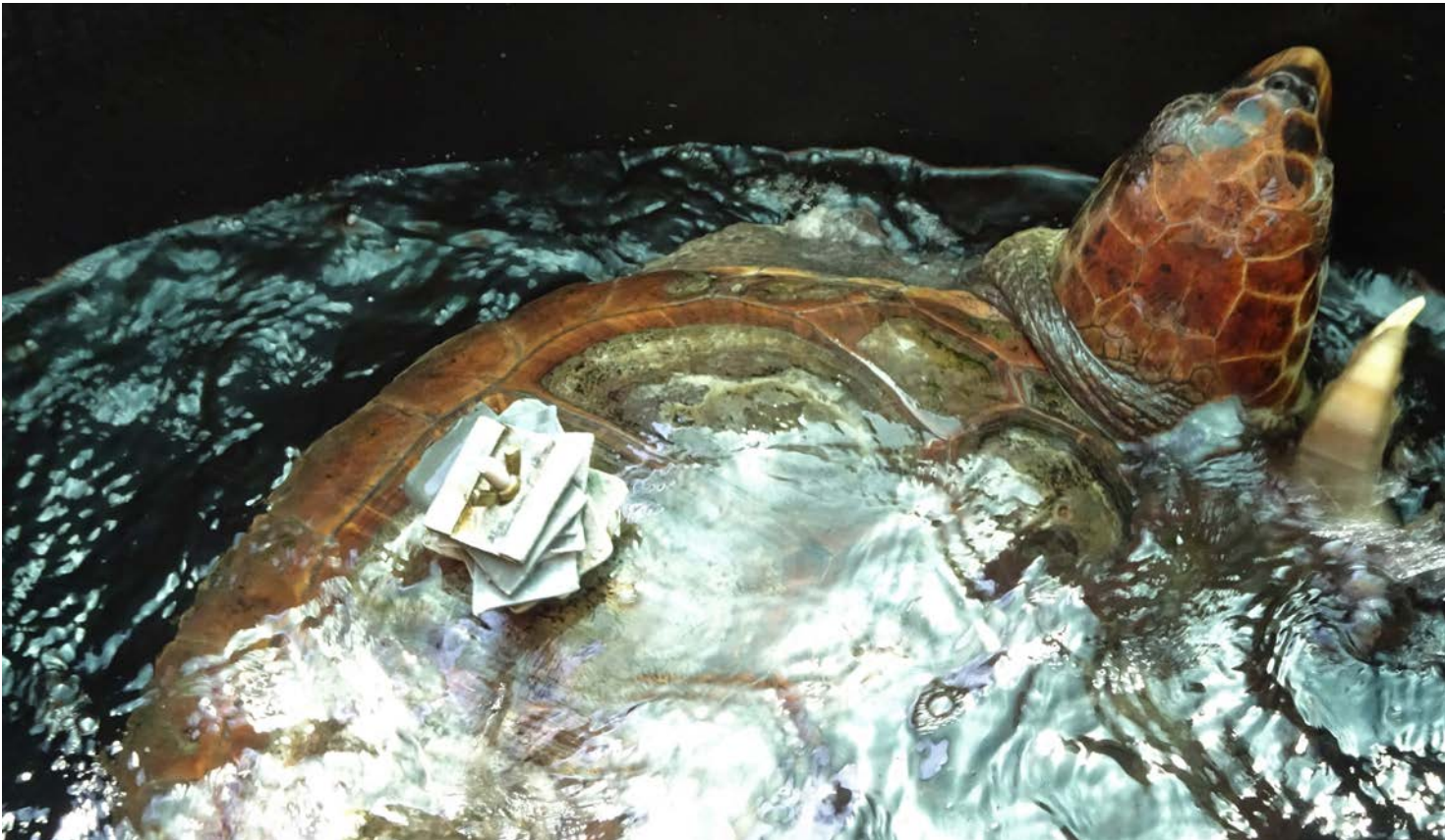
Archelon, in fact, was a giant marine turtle. It is the largest turtle ever documented. The biggest specimen found measured 460cm from head to tail, 400cm from flipper to flipper, and weighed 2,200kg. Archelon became extinct 66 million years ago in the Late Cretaceous Period.

Sea turtles have an integrated ‘natural GPS system’ installed in their brain that enables them to detect Earth’s magnetic field. This ancient ‘application’ helped turtles to detect it and use it as a compass for finding the location of the nest where they were born, so that in due time they would be able to lay their eggs in the exact same place.

Part of the Archelon volunteers’ work is to monitor the eggs’ incubation and, during the final week, install a bamboo ‘corridor’ from the nest to the sea to avoid the hatchlings confusing the beach bar and hotel lights with the reflection of the stars on the sea. In this way, they help them reach the sea in the right direction without coming across obstacles such as boats, umbrellas and sun loungers. About 75km of Greek beaches, with an average of 2,600 loggerhead *Caretta-Caretta* nests, are monitored through Archelon on Zakynthos, Crete and the Peloponnese each year.



● Top: E-type leads XK through the Greek streets, while Milena (above) was delighted with the memento of her trip!



Young volunteers and veterinarians from all over the world come and stay from four weeks to six months in Greece to help turtles laying eggs in their favourite country, and rescue others that need surgery and medical treatment.

Our careless behaviour is the worst threat for turtles and other sea creatures. Plastic bags thrown into the sea unfortunately look like jellyfish, the best gourmet treat for turtles! They end up in turtles' stomachs and since plastic doesn't disintegrate for at least 400 years, they fill it up so much that many die of starvation. Informing visitors and children about this danger is the second mission of this non-profit organisation.

Luckily, though, there is also some good news. At Archelon we learned that these beautiful creatures amazingly share some functional rules with our Jaguar cars! One loggerhead turtle, the endangered *Caretta-Caretta*, was recently found without her left-front flipper, cut off by the propeller of a boat. As a consequence of this severe injury, this turtle also lost her alignment and balance due to the missing weight. The result was that she was floating diagonally – three-quarters of the body into the water and one-



● From above: Sophia the turtle lost her front-left flipper, so she needed to be 'weighed down' in order to swim properly again; Archelon centre cares for turtles that need medical help



● Above: Jaguars prowling along the coastline; and (right) at the Plaza Resort Hotel





quarter up in the air, thus she was no longer able to plunge and find food.

In this instance, we can compare turtles to Jaguars: we put weights on our wire wheels to balance the alignment, and the veterinarians of the Archelon Centre applied the same idea to balance Sophia – the name of the sea turtle you can see in the picture. After reaching the perfect alignment, Sophia is now learning to swim using only three flippers, just like the famous Morgan three-wheeler!

Impressed by the Archelon mission and passion, the Jaguar Club of Greece decided to sponsor the protection of one nest for an entire year, until the newborn turtles safely reach the

sea. Milena, the youngest child in our group, was very proud to receive in exchange a toy turtle to remind her of this experience.

Our day would not be complete without a coastal ride on the Attica Riviera to reach the beach restaurant of the Plaza Resort Hotel in Anavyssos. We left our Jaguars posing for the Plaza Hotel guests' selfie portraits and relaxed under the shade of the restaurant awning on the seafront.

Another successful cultural and gastronomic tour was over but, before returning our Jaguars to their garages, we promised to meet again in October to explore the north of Evia island, for a visit to the best healing water resort in Greece. 🐢

● This page: the tour ended at the Plaza Resort Hotel in Anavyssos, and its seafront restaurant

