

Hawksbill

SEA TURTLE

Eretmochelys imbricata



- Hawksbills are the *smallest* of the sea turtle species found in the USVI
 - Adults average 100-150 pounds
- They get their name from their narrow, pointy beak that resembles that of a bird
 - Aids in extracting sponges and other invertebrates from crevices, **making these turtles a key part of coral reef ecosystems**



- Hawksbills lay the majority of nests on St. John
 - They can nest year-round, although peak season is August-November in the USVI
- They will return to their natal beach (where they were born) and lay 3-5 nests per season
 - 100-200 ping-pong sized eggs per nest
 - Eggs incubate for 55-75 days before hatching
- Prefer isolated beaches with vegetation, making St. John beaches ideal nesting sites



- Chances of survival are low for hatchlings (less than 1 out of 1000 will reach maturity)
- Hawksbills are **critically endangered** largely due to the historical exploitation of their beautiful shells, also known as “tortoise shell”
- Additional threats: direct harvest of turtles and eggs, boat strikes, fisheries bycatch, nesting and foraging habitat degradation, marine pollution, changing environmental conditions