



PROTECTING A NATURAL INVESTMENT

Ancient mariners that can stay underwater for up to five hours, sea turtles (*Chelonioidea*) can live up to a 100 years – provided they can survive their first few days of life. As infants, sea turtles are extremely vulnerable to predators, and additional pressure, such as loss of habitat, has led to a decline in their population. To counter this, Wakatobi Dive Resort in Indonesia is attempting to protect the turtles, from egg to hatchling stage, as part of their Collaborative Reef Conservation Program.

Female turtles lay their eggs on Wakatobi's beaches, bury and hide them, and then return to the sea, leaving the eggs unattended. The eggs take between 45 and 70 days to hatch. Wakatobi personnel spot these nest sites and erect fences around them to keep predators out and to prevent people from accidentally trampling the eggs. The newly hatched turtles are then collected and kept in holding tanks in the Wakatobi Dive Resort nursery for about a year, before being returned to the sea, giving them a much higher chance of survival. The initiative isn't just protecting future generations of sea turtles; it has become one of the highlights for visitors to the resort.

