



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

March 1ST , 2026

For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

“ZERO TOLERANCE” APPROACH FOR START OF TURTLE NESTING SEASON

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is officially announcing a mandate of disciplined conservation and rigorous enforcement to coincide with the start of the turtle nesting season on **March 1st**.

As the host of the world’s highest density of nesting Leatherback sea turtles, the nation holds a position of global significance. Internationally recognized sites such as **Grande Riviere and Matura Beach** serve as the destination for turtles traveling thousands of kilometers to return to local shores.

This is not accidental; it is trust in our environment. We cannot betray that trust. This season is about safeguarding what defines us.

Turtle protection is a matter of **economic intelligence**. When properly managed, the nesting season drives ecotourism diversification by supporting:

- Regulated tour operations.
- Local guesthouses and hospitality.
- Employment for local guides.

- Direct revenue for coastal communities.

The public is reminded that turtle nesting is a protected period under the law, and interference with turtles, nests, or hatchlings carries serious legal penalties. The MOD has confirmed a coordinated action plan with partner agencies to ensure a presence at nesting sites and a swift response to violations:

- A **zero-tolerance policy** will be strictly enforced regarding:
- **Poaching** of any kind;
- **Reckless beach driving**;
- **Disorienting activities** that undermine conservation efforts.

The Ministry is calling on all citizens to act as stewards of the environment. To ensure a successful season, the public is advised to:

- **Reduce Light Pollution:** Turn off bright lights near nesting areas;
- **Respect Boundaries:** Stay off nesting areas unless specifically authorized;
- **Report Violations:** Immediately report any illegal or suspicious activity.

This season is not a photo opportunity or a spectacle; it is a matter of national pride. We are moving early and deliberately to protect our heritage with the seriousness it deserves.

Wayne D Sturge, M.P.
Minister of Defence
Minister in the Ministry of Homeland Security

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