The solution sea turtles need

The practices of the Cayman Turtle Farm are devastating to the sea turtles being housed there and to the wild turtles in the sea. World Animal Protection’s solution is for the farm to be turned into a sea turtle rehabilitation and education facility like the Kélonia Observatory for Marine Turtles refuge on the island of Réunion. This center mirrors the conditions of a turtle’s natural habitat and promotes eco-tourism.

Cayman Turtle Farm

A losing proposition

The number of annual visitors is only half of what the Cayman Turtle Farm needs to break even.

Revenue

- Annual sales revenue: 43%
- Subsidized at loss to taxpayers: 57%

Animal welfare

- Habitat
  - Thousands of sea turtles are packed into tiny enclosures with insufficient depth for diving. The overcrowding leads to fighting, injuries and cannibalism.
  - Tanks are deep enough for the turtles to dive, environmentally enriched and encompass multiple species, mimicking the wild as much as possible.

Handling

- Tourists are encouraged to touch and even pick up juvenile green sea turtles as part of the “interactive” experience, posing risks to the turtles and the tourists:
  - Injury: Panicking turtles can break or dislocate a flipper, or develop a lung infection.
  - Transfer of pathogens: By crowding the turtles in small tanks, pathogens such as E. coli and salmonella are much more likely to multiply. These pathogens can be easily spread from turtles to humans.

At Kélonia tourists are not permitted to handle, touch, or swim with the turtles. Only for veterinary care purposes are the turtles ever handled, and then only by experienced and qualified staff.

Diet

- Pellets, consisting of “processed grain byproducts”
  - Sea vegetation supplemented with vitamins (sea grass is their natural diet)

Conservation

- Sea turtles returned to the wild between 2007-2017 (approx.):
  - 135
- Farm-bred sea turtles that have returned to nest on local beaches since 1980s:
  - 13
- Sea turtles rehabilitated and returned to the wild since 2006:
  - 320

Help make this solution a reality for sea turtles. Find out more: stopseaturtlefarm.org