



## Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys Kempii*)

### Appearance:

- The Kemp's Ridley is the smallest of all sea turtles.
- The shell ranges in color from an olive to gray-green and is oval or heart shaped.
- Weight: 90 lbs. and Carapace length: 2 ft.

**Diet:** Crabs, shrimp, and fish.

### Habitat:

- Coastal areas, bays and lagoons.
- Mostly found in the Gulf of Mexico, but they can be found migrating up and down the Atlantic Coast.

### Nesting:

- Females only nest in the Gulf of Mexico.
- They are the only sea turtle that consistently nests during the day.
- They take 11 to 35 years before they reach sexual maturity.
- Kemp's Ridley and Olive Ridley's share a nesting behavior called ARRIBADA (which means "arrival" in Spanish). The females all congregate in the waters along the beach and, on some unknown cue, emerge from the sea all at once!
- Nesting occurs from April to July.
- They lay around 100 ping-pong ball sized eggs that take 48 to 62 days of incubation depending on the temperature of the sand.



## Green (*Chelonia Mydas*)

### Appearance:

- Carapace can vary in color from black to grey to green, often with bold streaks or spots, and a yellowish white plastron.
- Each sea turtle has distinctive individual facial markings similar to fingerprints.
- Weight- about 300 lbs.
- Length- 3½ ft.

### Habitat:

- The most widespread species of sea turtle can be found in waters near 139 countries
- Adults live around sea grass meadows, coral reefs, bays and estuaries.
- They have been known to swim distances up to 1,400 miles.

### Diet:

- Adult green sea turtles are herbivores, eating primarily sea grasses and algae
- Young Green Sea Turtles are omnivores eating jellyfish, small mollusks and sponges.

### Nesting:

- Females nest every 2 to 4 years and can lay up to 9 nests a season!
- Green Sea Turtles take 20-50 years to reach sexual maturity
- They return to the same beach where they first hatched to lay their eggs.
- They lay 75-150 eggs per nest
- Incubation period is 48-70 days
- Breeding Grounds: The Caribbean, North and Central America, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Mediterranean.



**Status:** There are approximately 2,500 nesting females left in the world today. However just 50 years ago, 40,000 females were filmed nesting in just one day on a single beach. The Kemp's Ridley were listed as endangered on December 2, 1970.

**Threats:** Major threats to their survival include:

- Drowning in shrimp nets
- Commercial exploitation of sea turtle eggs
- Ocean pollution
- Development and destruction of nesting beaches by humans

**Did you know? The temperature of the sand during incubation determines the sex of a hatchling!**

**What can you do to help protect Kemp's Ridley sea turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches on the Gulf of Mexico.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!



**Status:**

- The Green Sea Turtle was listed threatened/endorsed on July 28, 1978.

**Major Threats:**

- Large scale poaching of adults for meat, shells and leather.
- Drowning in shrimp nets, tuna and swordfish long lines and other fishing gear.
- Development and destruction of nesting beaches by humans
- Ocean Pollution
- Commercial exploitation of eggs

**Did you know?**

**In some cultures eating turtles eggs is believed to lead to a long life.**

**What can you do to help protect Green Sea Turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!





## Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys Imbricata*)

### Appearance:

- They have a narrow beak that resembles that of a hawk and is designed for foraging coral.
- They have a slender body and head
- Their reddish or brown shell is thought to be the most beautiful of the sea turtles.
- The Hawksbill is the only sea turtle whose scutes (sections of its carapace or shell) overlap each other.
- Weight- 120 lbs.
- Length- 2.5 ft.

**Habitat:** They live around coral reefs, rocky shallows, shallow coasts and lagoons in tropical and subtropical areas.

### Nesting:

- They lay about 160 eggs per nest
- Females nest every 2 or 3 years, and lay several nests per season.
- Biologists are uncertain when they reach sexual maturity it could range from 20-50.
- Breeding grounds can be found in at least 60 different countries

**Diet:** The food of adults includes sponges, jellyfish, starfish, fish, urchins, and crustaceans. Sometimes they eat poisonous sponges, but the poison does not harm them and they can store it in their flesh. For this reason, **hawksbill meat is often poisonous.**



## Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

### Appearance:

- The only sea turtle without a shell
- The skin is leathery and scale-less
- Back is brownish-black with white spots
- Average weight is 1,100 pounds
- Carapace length is 6 feet

### Habitat:

- Live in both tropical and subtropical waters
- The only sea turtle that regularly visits the Pacific coast of North America
- Swim in colder, deeper waters than other sea turtles

### Nesting:

- Takes 8-15 years to reach reproductive maturity
- Lay 50- 180 eggs per nest
- Incubation takes 50-55 days
- Breeding grounds include Pacific coasts of Mexico, Costa Rica, French Guyana and Suriname, Gabon, and Caribbean coasts of Costa Rica, Trinidad, and Colombia

**Diet:** Leatherbacks eat jellyfish, especially "lion's mane" jellyfish which plastic bags are easily mistaken for.



**Status:** The Hawksbill is internationally recognized as an endangered species and was listed in 1970.

**Threats:**

- Due to their beautiful shell, Hawksbill have been harvested since Egyptian times
- Historically traders would pay up to \$100/lb. for hawksbill shells
- Commercial exploitation of turtle eggs
- Drowning's in shrimp nets and fishing gear
- Human Development on nesting beaches and;
- Ocean pollution

**What can you do to help protect Hawksbill Sea Turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!

**Did You Know?**  
The fashion style known as "Tortoise Shell" is based upon the pattern of Hawksbill shells.



**Status:** The leatherback sea turtle was listed as endangered on June 2, 1970 under the Endangered Species Act

**Threats:**

- Accidental capture and drowning of sea turtles in the tuna and swordfish fisheries
- Commercial exploitation of sea turtle eggs
- Development and destruction of nesting beaches
- Ocean pollution
- Ingestion of plastic bags and other garbage

**What can you do to help protect Leatherback Sea Turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!

**Did you know?**  
Leatherback sea turtles can hold their breath for up to 85 minutes.



## Flatback (*Nator depressus*)



### Appearance:

- Gets its name from its flat carapace
- Olive-gray color
- Average weight is 198 lbs
- Carapace length is about 3.25 feet

### Habitat:

- Live in inshore waters, bays, and shallow sea beds
- Confined to the tropical areas of the Australia continental shelf, including the Indonesian archipelago, Irian Jaya, and Papua New Guinea.

### Nesting:

- Lays approximately 50 eggs per nest, the fewest of any species of sea turtle
- Nesting season is November to February
- Incubation takes 6 weeks

**Diet:** Flatbacks eat sea cucumbers, jellyfish, mollusks, prawns, bryozoans, other invertebrates, and seaweed

## Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)



### Appearance:

- Shell is brown to reddish-brown
- Has long flippers and special glands that help it to drink salt water
- Average weight is 250 lbs
- Carapace length up to 4 feet

### Habitat:

- Live in coastal bays, estuaries, lagoons, and open oceans in warm and temperate waters
- Occur worldwide
- The most common sea turtle found in the United States

### Nesting:

- Nest in warm temperate and subtropical areas
- Can take 15-20 years to reach reproductive maturity
- Lay from 105-120 eggs per nest
- Incubation takes from 55-60 days
- The main nesting colonies of the loggerhead are on the Atlantic coast of Florida, and on the Masirah Island, Oman.

**Diet:** Loggerheads eat crabs, fish, mollusks, jellyfish, sea urchins, sponges, and shrimp.



**Status:** The flatback turtle is listed as vulnerable under the Australian Commonwealth's Endangered Species Protection Act of 1992.

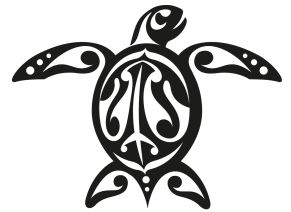
**Threats:**

- Egg predation at rookeries
- Indigenous harvest of adults and eggs
- Drowning in shrimp and gill nets
- Ocean pollution

**What can you do to help protect Flatback Sea Turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!

**Did you know?**  
Flatback sea turtles like to spend much of their day basking at the surface of the water. Sea birds are often found perching on their backs.



[seaturtles.org](http://seaturtles.org)



**Status:** Loggerheads are a threatened species. They were listed under the Endangered Species Act on June 2, 1970

**Threats:**

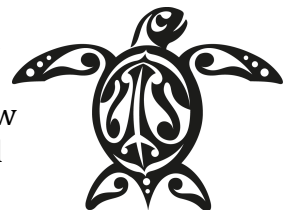
- Drowning in shrimp nets
- Accidental catching and drowning in tuna and swordfish fisheries
- Development and destruction of nesting beaches
- Ocean pollution
- Noise pollution
- Boat collisions

**What can you do to help protect Loggerhead Sea Turtles?**

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!

**Did you know?**

The skull of the loggerhead is broad and large, providing an anchor for the strong jaw muscles that are needed to crush shellfish.



[seaturtles.org](http://seaturtles.org)



## Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)

### Appearance:

- Carapace is plain olive gray above and creamy or white below
- Average weight is 85 lbs
- Carapace length is 2.5 feet

### Habitat:

- Olive ridleys live in the eastern Pacific and Indian oceans
- They migrate thousands of miles in the course of one year
- Rest in surface waters

**Diet:** Olive ridleys eat lobsters, fish, crustaceans, mollusks, algae, fish eggs, and jellyfish

### Nesting:

- Emerge from the sea en masse during a nesting behavior known as “arribada”
- As many as 610,000 females may nest in one arribada
- May take 20 years or more to reach reproductive maturity
- Lay about 100 eggs per nest
- Incubation takes 45-65 days
- Hatchlings are almost completely black



**Status:** Olive ridleys are endangered because there remain only a few nesting sites in the world, but they are thought to be the most abundant

### Threats:

- Large scale poaching of adult turtles for meat, shells, and leather
- Drowning in shrimp nets, long lines, and gillnets
- Development and destruction of nesting beaches
- Ocean pollution
- Commercial exploitation of eggs

### What can you do to help protect Olive Ridley Sea Turtles?

- Reduce your use of plastics.
- Stop debris from entering your local storm drains.
- Educate your community about the impacts of commercial fishing.
- Advocate for the use of TED's (turtle excluder devices) on shrimping boats.
- Protect turtle nesting beaches.
- Fundraise for turtle advocacy organizations like Turtle Island Restoration Network!

### Did you know?

Olive ridleys are named for the color of their shell, and are one of the smallest species of sea turtle

