



Sea Turtles



Photo: Ed Lawley

About Sea Turtles

Sea turtles, also called marine turtles, look like land-based tortoises but have flippers instead of legs. They have been on earth for more than a hundred million years, scientists have found. This makes them one of the oldest animal families on the planet.





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Different species

There are seven species of sea turtle:

- Leatherback
- Green
- Loggerhead
- Hawksbill
- Kemp's Ridley
- Olive Ridley
- Flatback

Some are much larger than others. The largest sea turtle is the Leatherback. It can grow up to 7 feet long and weighs up to 2 000 pounds. The largest Leatherback back turtle ever found was 8.5 feet long and weighed 2 020 pounds.





Laying and hatching

Marine turtles use sandy beaches to nest and lay their eggs, they deposit an average of about a hundred eggs in each nest and have between three and seven nests during the nesting season.



Sarah Nelms counting the empty egg shells once all the baby turtles have hatched and made their way to the sea. By doing this we can learn about how many eggs were laid in the nest and how many turtles hatched out, which tells us if there will be enough turtles in the future



Sarah Nelms with big green female turtle digging nest in the sand

It's estimated that only one in 1000 hatchlings survives to adulthood. Apparently, turtles in the South hatch in about 70 days – quicker than in the north – where they hatch in about 90 - 120 days.

