

Name: _____

Sea Turtles

by Guy Belleranti



Sea turtles are extraordinary animals. After all, what other reptile lived in the time of the dinosaurs and swims today in every ocean except the frigid Arctic?

There are seven sea turtle species in existence today. These include the green sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, Kemp's ridley sea turtle, hawksbill sea turtle, flatback sea turtle, and olive ridley sea turtle. The largest species, the leatherback, can weigh more than 1,000 pounds. One giant leatherback weighed in at 2,000 pounds!



~ PREVIEW ~

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for food and the waters where they prefer to breed. Sea turtles travel hundreds, and even thousands, of miles during these migrations. Did you know that leatherback sea turtles are known for migrating up to 10,000 miles to search for food? That's one of the longest migrations of any animal on earth!

Sea turtles can stay underwater for long periods. In fact, green sea turtles can stay underwater for as long as five hours! However, all sea turtles must come to the surface to breathe.

Like all species of turtles, sea turtles have no teeth. Instead, they have beak-like mouths. Each sea turtle species has a slightly different mouth based on its dietary needs. The loggerhead sea turtle is a carnivore and therefore has a strong, sharp beak for crushing the shells of crabs, clams and shrimp. The green sea turtle is a herbivore with a serrated beak that is perfect for cutting sea grasses. The leatherback sea turtle has a soft beak that works well for eating jellyfish.

Do sea turtles ever leave the water and spend time on land? The answer is yes; however, they spend almost all of their time in the ocean. Female sea turtles do come ashore to lay their eggs. They dig holes in the beach with their flippers. These holes are the nests where they bury their eggs before they head back out to the ocean.



Sometimes predators often eat the eggs before they even hatch. In fact, scientists estimate that about 1 in 1,000 hatchlings, or baby sea turtles, survive to adulthood. As you could imagine hatchlings are easy prey for predators on the beach, so the sooner they make it to the ocean, the better. Unfortunately, many hatchlings are snatched by predators before they can reach the water.



PREVIEW

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A red-bordered box containing a cartoon superhero character on the left, flying and holding a globe. To the right of the character, the word "PREVIEW" is written in large, bold, red letters with a black outline. Below this, the text "Please log in or register to download the printable version of this worksheet." is written in a smaller, black font.

Hopefully, conservation practices will be able to save them.



About the Author

Guy Belleranti is an author of fiction, poetry, articles, puzzles, and humor for children and adults. He also works as a docent at the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences teaching children about the wild animals at the zoo.

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1. According to the article, what are three ways that a sea turtle is well adapted to its environment?

2. What is one difference between sea turtles and turtles that live on land?

3.



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1 as

4. Sea turtles share similar features with birds. Choose the feature that sea turtles and birds **do not** share from the list below.

- a. Sea turtles and birds spend most of their time on the beach.
- b. Sea turtles and birds have beaks instead of teeth.
- c. Sea turtles and birds lay their eggs in nests.
- d. Sea turtles and birds can travel thousands of miles each year.

5. Which species of sea turtle eats jellyfish and can weigh as much as 2,000 pounds?

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. _____ v e r s c o t i n o a n
hint: the practice of keeping our planet healthy

2. _____ d e r e n g a n e d
hint: at risk of becoming extinct

3. _____ d r i f i g
hint: extremely cold

4. _____

5. _____



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6. _____ s i n g l a t h c h
hint: baby turtles

7. _____ b u r d a n i s c e t
hint: the interruption of a natural process

8. _____ g e m r e e
hint: to come into view

9. _____ r o a t e x r i n a y r d
hint: fascinating, very unusual

10. _____ s o r t i s t o e
hint: a variation of turtles that live on land

Name: _____

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In the article, "Sea Turtles," you learned that sea turtles are endangered, or at risk of becoming extinct. Throughout its life, a sea turtle will face many threats to its survival, including threats from human activity.

On the lines below, summarize the various dangers sea turtles face from the time they hatch through adulthood. Be sure to include natural threats, such as predation, and human threats. Conclude your summary by offering one idea about how humans can help protect sea turtles from extinction. Be sure to use complete sentences.



~ **PREVIEW** ~

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ANSWER KEY

Sea Turtles

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1. According to the article, what are three ways that a sea turtle is well adapted to its environment?



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5. Which species of sea turtle eats jellyfish and can weigh as much as 2,000 pounds?

Leatherback sea turtle

ANSWER KEY

Sea Turtles

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. conservation

v e r s c o t i n o a n

hint: the practice of keeping our planet healthy

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.



~ PREVIEW ~

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10. tortoises

s o r t i s t o e

hint: a variation of turtles that live on land