

Green Sea Turtle

(*Chelonia mydas*)



Relatives

Member the Family Cheloniidae which includes all other living species of sea turtles except the leatherback.

Description

Have an olive-brown shell with darker spots and streaks, a single pair of scales between the eyes, a single claw on each front flipper and four pairs of costal plates on each side.

Size

30-48in (76-122cm), largest recorded was over 60in (150cm)
220-450lbs (100-204kg), largest recorded was over 650lbs (295kg)

Habitat

Spend a majority of time in shallow, ocean waters where vegetation is plentiful. Will migrate long distances from feeding area to breeding area. Females return to land to lay eggs.

Predators

Eggs are eaten by snakes, raccoons, wild cats/dogs and people. Hatchlings are eaten by ghost crabs and birds. Adults are eaten by killer whales and sharks.

Diet/Prey

Juveniles eat mostly crustaceans, mollusks, and echinoderms. Adults eat vegetation (seagrass and seaweed).

Reproduction

Nesting occurs in the summer to early fall. Can lay 200 or more eggs in one clutch and may lay 3-5 clutches a year. Only nest every 2-3 years. Egg incubation is about 45-70 days and hatchlings are 1.5-3 inches (4.1-6cm).

Adaptations

- Green sea turtles have shells that provide protection to their internal organs.
- Green sea turtles have four limbs that allow for movement on land and in water.
- Green sea turtles have flippers that enable them to be efficient swimmers.
- Green sea turtles have a skin covering of dry, horny scales that protect their bodies and help them to keep from drying out.
- Green sea turtles have strong hind flippers. Female green sea turtles use their hind flippers to create nests on sandy beaches.
- Green sea turtles grow to very large sizes. As adults, their large size makes them too big to be eaten by many predators.
- Adult green sea turtles primarily eat plants. The jaws of the adults are finely serrated on the edges for "cutting" vegetation.