



http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/images/turtles/green_seastars_carolinesrogers.jpg

SEA TURTLES

An Endangered Reptile

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Introduction

Did you know that some kinds of sea turtles are endangered? They are and they really need our help! For a long time people have been polluting the habitat where the sea turtles live. They are either being killed by the pollution or have to move away from the place that they live—which puts them at risk! Sea turtles are big, graceful, and beautiful animals. They deserve to live, just like people do! By learning more about sea turtles, you can actually help these amazing creatures!



http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/images/turtles/green_seastars_carolinesrogers.jpg

Names

It's true that some people think that the only name for sea turtles is sea turtles. But it is not. The common name for Sea Turtles is Sea Turtle. One kind of endangered sea turtle is the Green sea turtle. Another is the



This is a Loggerhead sea turtle.

<http://marinesciencetoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/loggerhead-sea-turtle-courtesy-of-strobilomyces-france.jpg>

Loggerhead sea turtle. The scientific name for the green sea turtle is *Chelonia mydas*.

The scientific name for the loggerhead turtle is *Caretta caretta*. As you can see,

sea turtles really do have some interesting names.

Description

The sea turtle has many different characteristics. The sea turtle is a vertebrate, an animal with a backbone, as well as a reptile. Their jaws replace the role of their teeth, which means that they usually have pretty strong jaws. There are two kinds of endangered sea turtles: the Loggerhead and the Green Sea Turtle. There are only about 60,000 nesting female Loggerhead sea turtles left. There are about 200,000 nesting female Green sea turtles left. The green sea turtle has a distinct green color under the shell which gives it its name. The Loggerhead Sea Turtle has an oddly shaped head which clearly gives it its name.

Sea Turtle Life-cycle

The life cycle of the sea turtle is very interesting. The life cycle of the sea turtle starts with the egg. The hatchlings break open the egg and make their way to the sea. It may take up to seven days for a hatchling to reach the surface of the sand after hatching. They have an egg tooth like a chicken does, which is used for breaking open the egg. When it is mature, the hatchling grows up and the male and female



This green sea turtle was once a baby floating amongst the seaweed.

<http://www.animalspot.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Green-Sea-Turtle-Baby.jpg>

mate. When they have mated, the female always returns to the beach where she was born to nest. The female tries to nest during the warmest months of the year. She will use her front flippers to dig a nest. Soon, fifty to two-hundred eggs are laid. The eggs are covered with sand that keeps them at a healthy and safe temperature. Once hatched, the hatchlings will make their way to the ocean at night, to keep away from predators. Once they are in the ocean, they will float amongst the seaweed for food and protection. The life cycle and survival of the hatchlings can be a very long and dangerous process.



A baby sea turtle

<http://www.animalspot.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Green-Sea-Turtle-Baby.jpg>

Habitat

Sea turtles have an extensive habitat because there are warm oceans all over the world. Sea turtles need shallow bays, estuaries (the tidal mouth of a large river, where the tide meets the stream) , and open sea

habitats for survival. Their location varies around warm sea waters all over the Earth. Sea turtles migrate

around the world for hundreds of miles. Scientists

are working to follow these migrations. Some

migration distances can be up to 1,400 miles

long. No matter how bad the the condition of the

water, Sea Turtles remain beautiful.



△ a sea turtle swims in the ocean.

http://images.ethicalocean.com/splash2_files/turtle.jpg

Sea Turtle Food

Imagine sitting on the beach watching a crab. The crab suddenly disappears with the sound of a crunch. A sea turtle is likely nearby! What sea turtles eat is determined by the size of their jaws . Most sea turtles eat



A green sea turtle feeds on sea grass.

<http://www.seeturtles.org/images/medium/270.jpg>

fish, crabs, sponges, and sea cucumbers. Green sea turtles have slightly smaller jaws and mostly eat sea grass, but also shellfish and sponges. Clearly, these omnivores have a very interesting diet.

Range and Population

The sea turtle's population is not fully known. Researchers believe that there are seven different types of sea turtles alive today. The population of the sea turtle is difficult to determine because the ocean is a large place and scientists struggle to find every single sea turtle. Even their population is unclear, though people do know that only two out of the six kinds of sea turtles are endangered. Out of the endangered species of sea turtles, one is more endangered than the other. Sadly the population of the loggerhead appears fewer than the green sea turtle.



This is a sea turtle range map. The orange shows where sea turtles are found in the ocean.

<http://www.defenders.org/sites/default/files/sea-turtle-range-map.jpg>

What Turtles are Valued For

Poachers are a big problem for sea turtles. They will kill them for their meat. It's surprising that sea turtles are hunted for their meat, but people in other places think that their meat is delicious! The shells of the sea turtle are also highly valued. In some countries sea turtle shells are used to make hair combs or clips. Some shells will even be made for frames on eye glasses! Poachers will also steal, and even eat, the sea turtle eggs, sell the eggs at market. If poachers keep this up, then sea turtles could become extinct quickly.



A sea turtle has been killed because a person wanted it's shell.

http://lifeofpi3u.wikispaces.com/file/view/sea_turtle_shell.jpg/333050104/sea_turtle_shell.jpg

Threats

The main reason that sea turtles are endangered is humans. Human pollution is killing sea turtles.

People litter the ocean and beaches where the sea turtles live. Sea turtles have a few predators that contribute to killing them off as well. Although there are more, the main predator is the tiger shark. Slow reproduction is another problem for sea turtles. Only one in a thousand baby sea turtles survives to become a fully grown adult. The female will nest four to six times per season, but they only do that once every one to three years.



A tiger shark is one of the sea turtle's predators

<http://philltheflyingfish.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/tiger-shark1.jpg>

Solutions

Although sea turtles face many problems, there are still solutions. The area in which sea turtles live should be blocked off and people should keep a very close eye on them so no poachers can get to them. It is already illegal to hurt a sea turtle or to touch a single sea turtle egg. Poaching is already against the law, but people should work even harder to stop it all together.

Organizations have already raised money for awareness of sea turtles and have put together sea turtle hospitals. Clearly sea turtles are treated by several issues, but now you know that many things can still be done to protect these astonishing animals!

This is a Sea Turtle Hospital.



<http://www.earthshinenature.com/images/SCturtleHosp.jpg>



http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_v-5chhEIit4/TNGYvVQanoI/AAAAAAAAATY/9yBzYjA_tNk/s400/Turtle+Hospital.JPG

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