

MEET THE SEA TURTLE

ABOUT ME

I'm a sea turtle. I live in the ocean and spend most of my time swimming and looking for food. I'm a very good swimmer and, can hold my breath for a long time, sometimes up to five hours!

I have special glands near my eyes that help me get rid of excess salt from the ocean water I drink. This is important because too much salt can be harmful to me.

I'm one of the oldest living creatures on the planet, and have been around for over 100 million years! I've seen a lot of changes in the ocean over the years, and some of them have not been good. Pollution and hunting have put my species in danger, and many of us are now considered endangered.

WHY WE ARE IMPORTANT

We play a vital role in the ecosystem of the ocean. As a sea turtle, I eat jellyfish, seagrass, and other marine life. This may not sound like a big deal, but it actually helps keep the ocean clean.

You see, jellyfish can multiply quickly and overpopulate certain areas of the ocean. If there are too many jellyfish, they can become a problem for other marine life and even humans who like to swim in the ocean. By eating jellyfish, my species helps keep their population in check.

Seagrass is also important for the ocean because it provides a habitat for many different types of marine life. By eating seagrass, I help keep it from becoming overgrown and suffocating other marine species.

MY NAME

There are seven living species of sea turtles. Each of these marine reptiles have a scientific name as well as a common name. For example, the largest sea turtle in the world's common name is the leatherback sea turtle, but its scientific name is *Dermochelys coriacea*. The word "sea" refers to the fact that we live in the ocean, as opposed to other types of turtles that live on land or in freshwater habitats.

Where does your name come from?

DID YOU KNOW?

We live for a long time!
We can live for between 30-50 years!

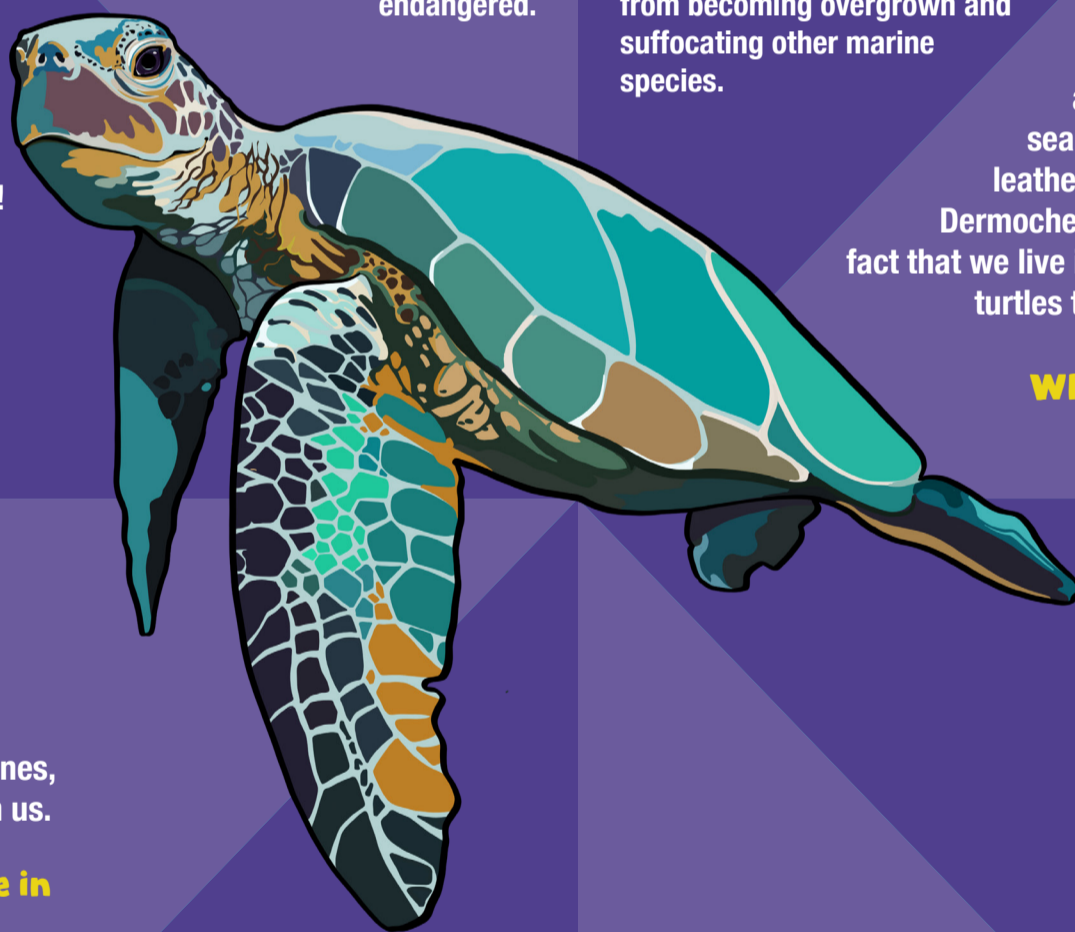
Who is the oldest person you know?

DID YOU KNOW?

Our shells grow.

Our shells are made up of over 50 bones, including the spine, which grow with us.

How many bones do you have in your body?



WHAT WE LIKE TO EAT

Green sea turtles are **HERBIVORES** as adults, although as hatchlings, we are **OMNIVORES**.

Our diet consists primarily of algae, seagrasses, and seaweed. Green sea turtles have a finely serrated (sawlike) beak that allows us to scrape algae off rocks and tear grasses and seaweeds.

Do you like to eat seafood?

TOP THREATS

We are threatened by hunters and poachers who harvest us for our eggs, skin, and shells. Plastic has become a terrible problem for us, as it looks so much like jellyfish! We are also killed when we get caught in fishing nets and other man-made debris.

MY FAMILY

We return to the same beach every time we are ready to lay eggs, and often return to a few hundred metres within the same area. We usually lay 100-125 eggs per nest and will nest multiple times, about two weeks apart, over several months. As soon as the eggs hatch (roughly 2 months later), the hatchlings dig out of our nest. Once they emerge, they have to hurry to the sea to make their way offshore into the open ocean. We face many threats at first, but those that survive to become adults are decades old.

