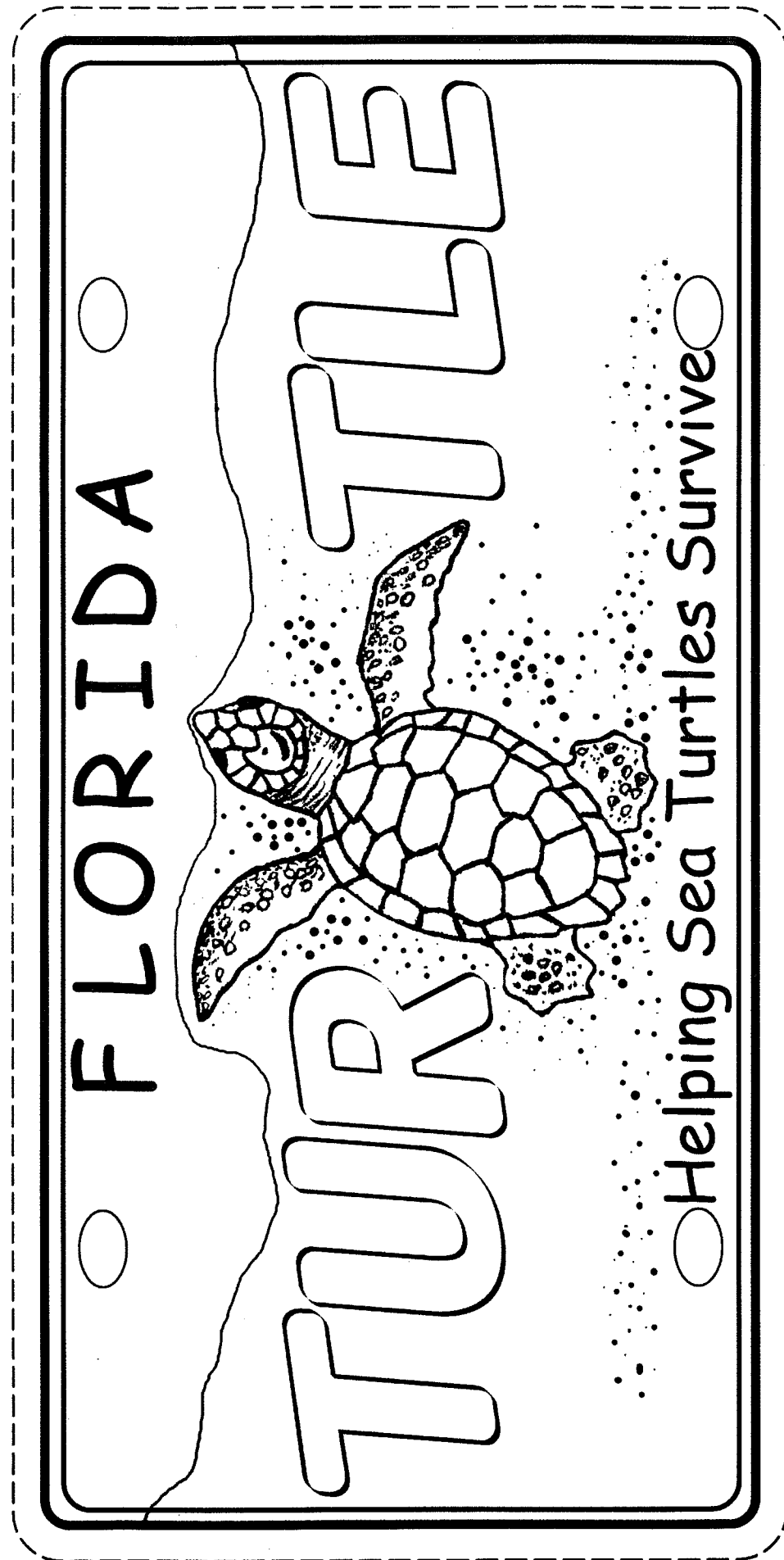


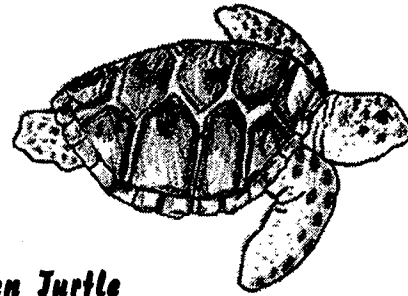
Sea Turtle License Plate

After about two months in their sandy nest on the beach, the two inch long baby sea turtles, known as hatchlings, crawl out of their eggs and scurry down to the sea. The hatchlings are attracted to the sea by the bright shiny reflection of the night sky over the ocean. Sometimes the hatchlings get confused by bright lights that line the beach and will head towards land instead of the sea, so it is very important to turn off lights that can be seen from the beach during the months of June, July, August, September and October.

Below is a SEA TURTLE LICENSE PLATE. It shows a hatchling on its journey to the sea. The plates are sold at your local Tax Collector's Office. The money raised from the plate sales is used to support sea turtle protection, research and recovery programs. Show your support of sea turtles by coloring your very own Sea Turtle License Plate. After you finish coloring your plate you can display it by cutting it out on the dotted line.

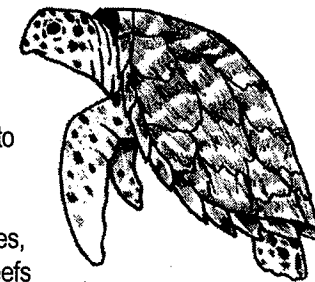


Sea Turtles of Florida



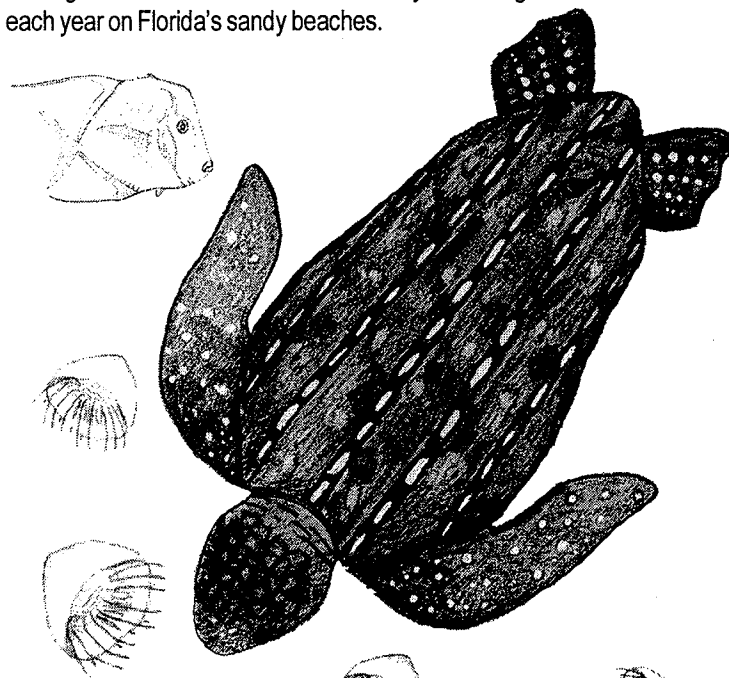
Hawksbill Turtle

The hawksbill turtle is a small to medium sized turtle. Their shell is various shades of brown and tan. The beautiful shell of this turtle was used to make jewelry and trinkets. Because of this, they were hunted throughout the world. Hawksbill turtles usually feed on sponges, an animal that attaches itself to the sea floor. Hawksbill turtles are often found off the coast of Florida and in the Florida Keys. They are very agile turtles, and have been known to climb over reefs and rocks to nest on beaches where larger turtles cannot go.



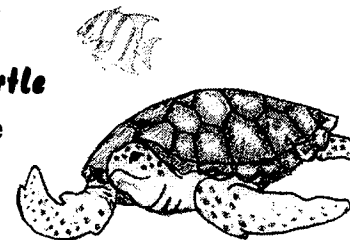
Green Turtle

Green turtles are named for the greenish color of their body fat. Their shell is brown and marked with dark spots. Green turtles are different from other turtles. When they are young they are carnivorous (meat eating); however, when they reach adulthood they become herbivorous (plant eating). They are the only adult sea turtle with a diet of seagrass and seaweed. Green turtles lay an average of 2600 nests each year on Florida's sandy beaches.



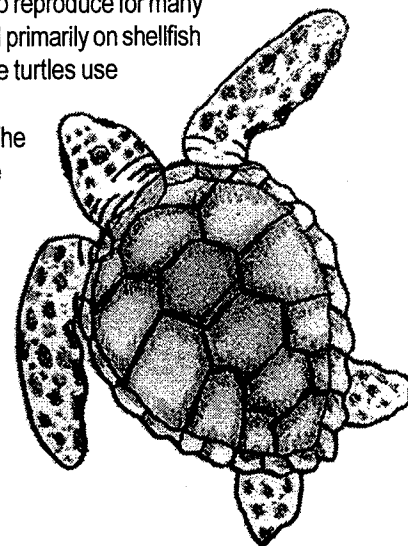
Kemp's Ridley Turtle

Kemp's ridley turtles are the smallest and most endangered of all sea turtles. The shell of the Kemp's ridley is olive green in color. Their preferred food is blue crab, but they will also feed on jellyfish, clams, and fish. These turtles mainly live in the Gulf of Mexico; however, they regularly venture as far north as Maine.



Loggerhead Turtle

Loggerhead turtles are the most common sea turtle in Florida. They are reddish-brown in color and are named for their large head. Loggerhead turtles are very large turtles. They can grow to weigh as much as 350 pounds. Loggerhead sea turtles take 15 to 30 years to reach maturity, and continue to reproduce for many years. Loggerhead turtles feed primarily on shellfish such as clams or crabs. These turtles use their powerful jaw muscles to crush the shells of their prey. The southeastern U.S. is one of the most important nesting grounds in the world for loggerhead turtles. The highest densities occur along the southeast coast of Florida from Brevard to Palm Beach counties.



Leatherback Turtle

The leatherback sea turtle is the largest of all the sea turtles. From nose to tail, the largest leatherback ever recorded was nearly 10 feet long. There is no mistaking a leatherback turtle--their shell is smooth and scaleless, dark-brown to black in color, and marked with pink, blue, or white spots and blotches. Jellyfish are the favorite food of leatherbacks. Their scissor-like jaws help them slice their prey, and stiff, backwards pointing spines in the mouth aid in swallowing their soft prey. In Florida, leatherback turtles lay an average of 286 nests each year.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission • 620 South Meridian Street, 6-A • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600
(850) 922-4330 www.MyFWC.com/psm

Special thanks to Kathryn Purifoy who created most of the artwork and design of this publication.

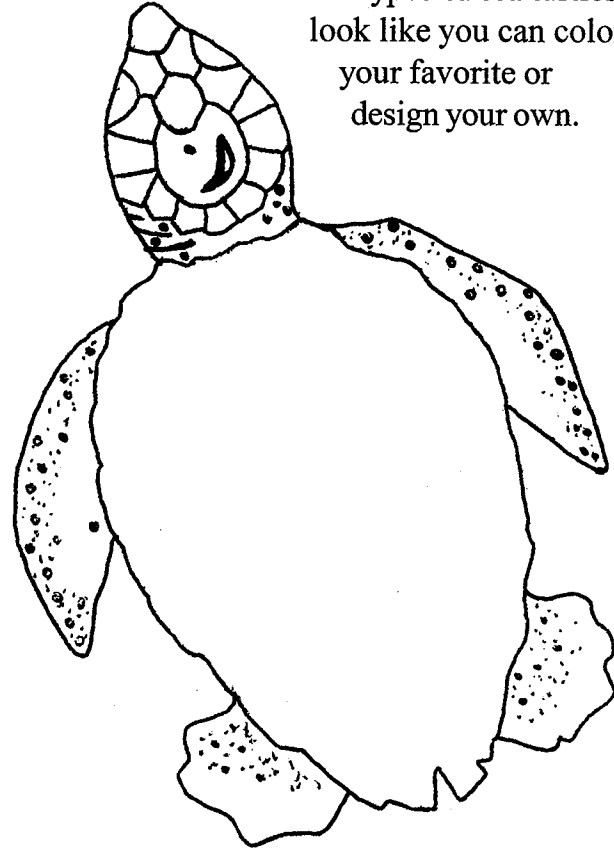
Helping Sea Turtles Survive

Fun Sea Turtle Facts

- * Sea turtles are one of the oldest creatures on earth. They have remained almost unchanged for 110 million years.
- * Sea turtles can remain underwater for hours at a time if they are sleeping or resting. When active they will surface several times an hour to breathe.
- * The temperature of the nest determines the sex of the young sea turtles. Warm temperatures result in more females and cool temperatures produce more males.
- * All sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act. Loggerheads are listed as "threatened," which means that they could become endangered without protection. The other four species of sea turtles are "endangered," which means that they are in danger of becoming extinct.

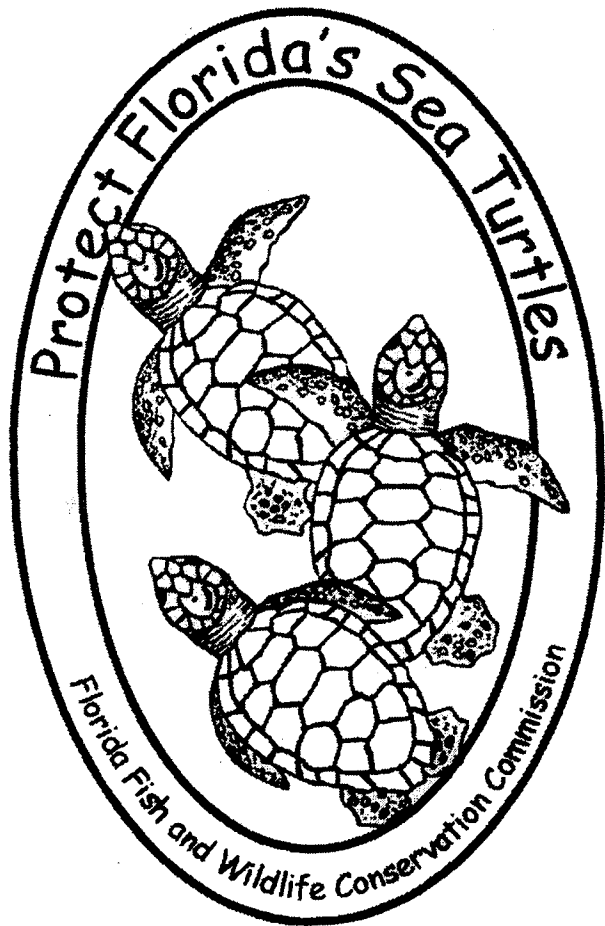
Color-A-Turtle

Now that you know what the different types of sea turtles look like you can color your favorite or design your own.



What You Can Do To Help

- * If you live along the beach, turn out your lights at night--especially those that can be seen from the beach.
- * Never leave beach chairs or other large items out overnight. Sea turtles can run into them and get tangled up, hurt, or even leave the beach without nesting.
- * Never approach or take flash photos of turtles you see on the beach. Lights and noises can hinder the turtle's ability to nest or find its way back to the sea.
- * Keep oceans, bays, and rivers pollution-free. Take a trash bag with you when you go to the beach and pick up any trash that you see.
- * Purchase a sea turtle decal or license tag from your local tax collector's office to help with protection efforts in Florida.



Resource Protection - 1-888-404-FWCC (3922)

Report injured or dead sea turtles, poaching of eggs or other wildlife emergencies.

Avoiding Predators

It is a cool night and this group of tiny sea turtles have just hatched from their sandy nest. They will face many dangers on their journey to the sea. They must avoid all kinds of **predators**. Predators are other animals that will eat them, and include raccoons, ghost crabs, sea gulls, octopuses, and some fish. Many sea turtles are eaten by these predators before they become adults. In fact, only about 1 in 1000 sea turtles will survive into adulthood. To avoid being eaten by predators many sea turtles swim offshore to floating seaweed beds. They will live in the seaweed beds for several years.

Follow the paths below to find out which tiny turtle will make it to the safety of the seaweed bed.

