

SEA TURTLES

the ambassadors of the ocean



sea turtles of the world

Sea Turtles have been around since the time of the dinosaurs for 100 million years. Seven species of these sea turtles are still found in almost every ocean basin throughout the world. They spend their entire lives at sea, except when as adults, female turtles come ashore to lay eggs.



Green sea turtles are mainly carnivorous until their juvenile stage and as they age they become herbivorous.



Hawksbill turtles are known for their hawk-like beak and their colourful carapace. Their shell was used to make ornaments like combs and earrings until they were protected under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.



Around 50-100 species of plant and invertebrates are known to hitch a ride on loggerhead turtles backs.



Leatherbacks can consume twice their body weight per day, feeding exclusively on soft-bodied invertebrates like jellyfish.



The ridleys are the smallest among all the turtle species of the world but congregate in large numbers during their nesting period in certain parts of the world.



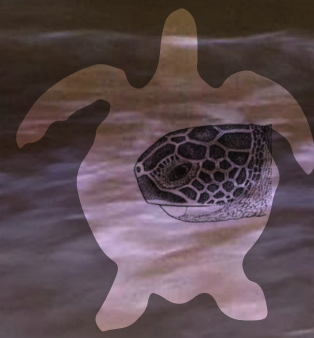
Flatback turtles are endemic only to Australia, where they breed and nest.



5.5' -
5.0' -
4.5' -
4.0' -
3.5' -
3.0' -
2.5' -
2.0' -
1.5' -
1.0' -
30.48 cm



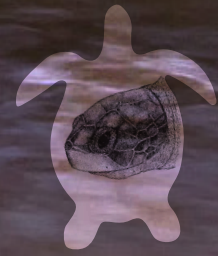
Leatherback
Dermochelys coriacea



Green
Chelonia mydas



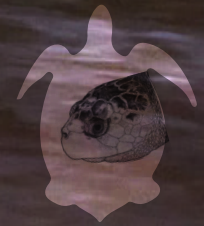
Loggerhead
Caretta caretta



Flatback
Natator depressus



Hawksbill
Eretmochelys imbricata



Kemp's Ridley
Lepidochelys keampii



Olive Ridley
Lepidochelys olivacea

Natural threats:

- Most threats to turtles occur during the hatchling stage. Crabs, dogs, birds, ants prey upon hatchlings when they are moving towards the sea after hatching. In the adult stages they face occasional shark attacks.

Human caused threats:

- Marine debris are formed due to pollution, plastic and other waste washed into the water from land. A lot of turtles are killed by getting entangled in these debris and also by consuming plastic bags confusing them as their prey.
- Artificial lighting from areas around the beach disorients turtle hatchlings and cause them to move towards the light source instead of the sea after hatching.
- Coastal armouring built around the coasts take up the sandy nesting space of the turtles.
- Beach erosion caused by lack of nutrient in sand, waves, tides or drainage reduces the nesting area of the turtles.
- Turtles accidentally caught in fishing nets cannot surface to breathe and drown.
- Poaching of turtles to consume turtle meat and eggs is still prevalent in a few areas.
- Climate change affects temperatures around the world and temperature plays a very important role in determining turtle gender. Higher temperatures lead to the hatchling becoming female while lower temperatures produce males.

Sea turtles lay 100 to 150 eggs in small pits they dig on the beach above the high tide line

After 45-60 days, hatchlings are born

Hatchlings make their way from land to sea. Many do not make it and are eaten by predators

Sea Turtle Life Cycle

Migrating across oceans, they return to the beaches they were born at, to mate in the offshore waters and nest

Out at sea, hatchlings grow into juvenile turtles taking 10-20 years to mature

D I E T

Sea turtles can be carnivorous, herbivorous or omnivorous. Some of their common food types include jellyfish, seaweed, crabs, shrimp, sponges, snails, algae and molluscs. Each species has a different jaw structure to match its diet.

what do turtles eat?

H A B I T A T

where do turtles live?

Sea turtles are found in all warm and temperate waters throughout the world and most sea turtles undergo long migrations, some as far as 10000 kilometres, between their feeding grounds and the beaches where they nest.

fun facts!

Male sea turtles spend their entire lives at sea after leaving the beach as hatchlings. They are also air breathing animals and need to surface every 45 minutes.

sea turtle biology



About Lakshadweep

Lakshadweep is a group of 36 islands known for its exotic and sun-kissed beaches and lush green landscape. The name Lakshadweep in Malayalam and Sanskrit means ‘a hundred thousand islands’.

India’s smallest Union Territory Lakshadweep is an archipelago comprising of 12 atolls, three reefs, five submerged banks and ten inhabited islands. The natural landscapes, sandy beaches, the abundant live coral associated fauna and the absence of a rushed lifestyle enhance the mystique of Lakshadweep.

Kadmat Island

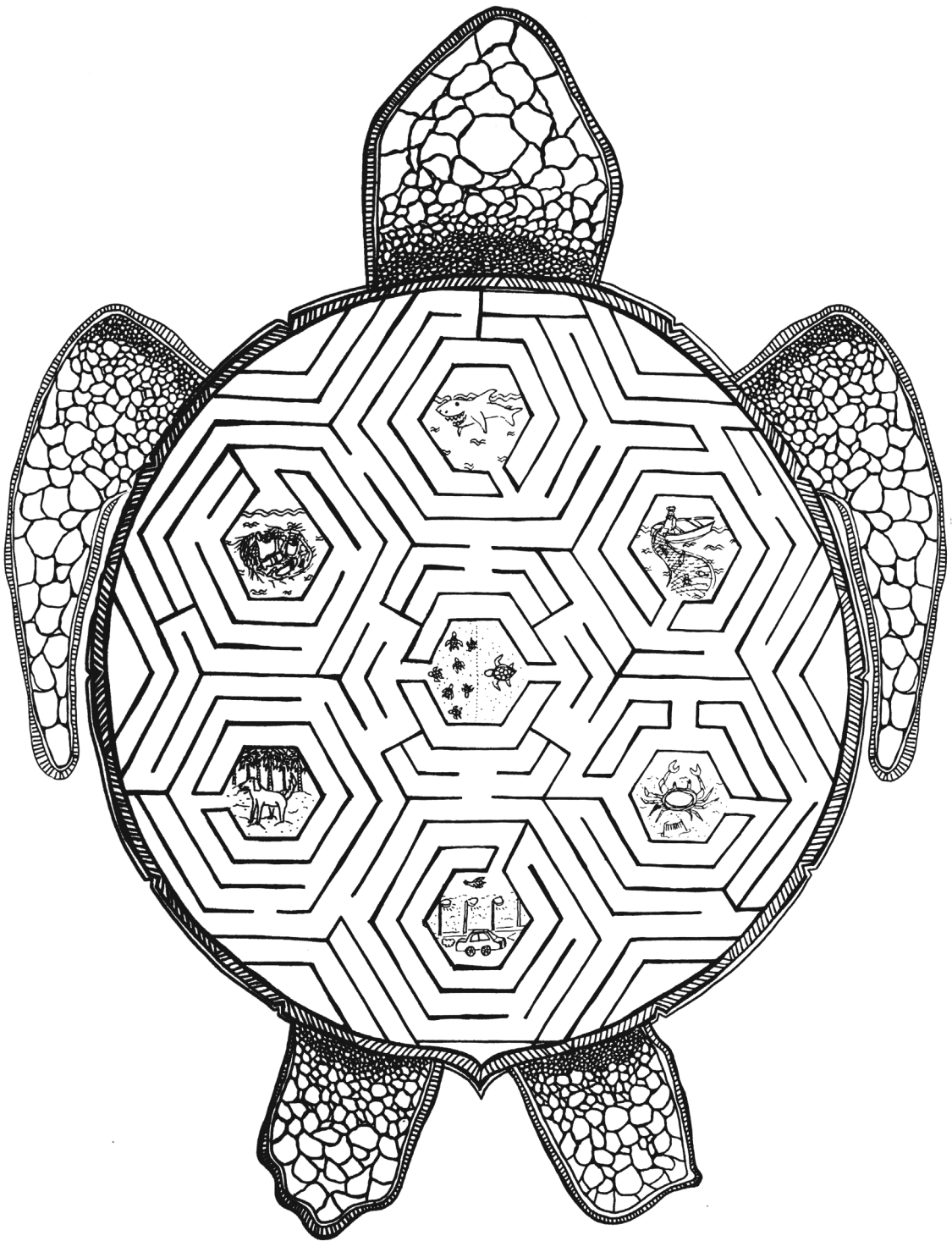
Kadmat island is 8 Kms long and 550 metres wide at the broadest point located between Amini Island in the south and Chetlat Island in the north. This is the only island which has shallow lagoons on the East and West of the landmass. The lagoons have a rich live coral cover, ornamental fishes and other associated marine biodiversity. In addition, the lagoon on the west is ideal for water sports.

Sea turtles of Lakshadweep

Four species of sea turtles are known to occur in the Lakshadweep waters; the green, hawksbill, olive ridley and the leatherback. Lakshadweep is one of the few regions in India that supports a healthy foraging and nesting grounds for green turtles and hawksbills in Indian waters.

The uninhabited islands of Suheli are known to host the highest density of green turtle nesting while all other species are known to nest in lesser numbers on the sandy beaches of all the other islands.

WILL THE HATCHLING FIND ITS WAY BACK SAFELY TO THE BEACH TO NEST?



fun fact!

It is believed that only one in a thousand hatchlings survive to become adults.

Produced by: The Dept of Environment and Forests, U.T of Lakshadweep