



Image from USFWS

# Loggerhead Life History

Answers to Worksheet that Accompanies  
the PhotoDocumentary by Rachel Teller

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1. Which is NOT an adaptation that makes sea turtles well suited for life at sea? (circle one)
  - They occupy warm waters around the globe.
  - They can hold their breath for a long time in their cold-water habitats.
  - They have flippers to help them swim through the water quickly and easily.
2. Who has inhabited Earth the longest- sea turtles or human beings? **sea turtles**
3. T / **F**: Loggerheads begin their lives on land, as eggs, and only return to feed and reproduce.
4. After mating in coastal waters, male loggerhead turtles return to their **foraging areas** and females remain near the coast throughout the nesting season.
5. Sea turtles are a late-maturing species. It takes a female about **30** years to reach reproductive maturity, an age when she is able to lay eggs. Although they don't nest every year, they lay 3-5 nests per **breeding season**.
6. Natal imprinting describes the behavior demonstrated by most female turtles in which they **return to the area or beach from which they were born to lay their eggs**.

7. Loggerhead nests usually contain about 120 eggs. Of the following choices, which is the best estimate of how many eggs a female loggerhead lays in one breeding season- 100, 500 or 1,000?

(circle one) Remember to think about how many eggs she lays each time she lays a nest...

8. T / F: A mother sea turtle provides parental care to her offspring.

9. Incubation takes about 55-60 days on South Carolina beaches. In a cooler climate, like that in North Carolina, the incubation period will be longer (longer or shorter).

10. The genes you inherited from your parents made you either female or male. What determines the sex of a sea turtle? temperature of the nest during a certain period of incubation

11. Warm nest temperatures produce females and males come from cooler nests. Think about what would happen if people exhibited Temperature-dependent Sex Determination... all boys born in Canada and all females born in Central America?! (just a thought– this will be addressed in the sex ratios lesson plan)

12. The pivotal temperature is the temperature that produces half females and half males (29°C in SC), though nests are usually all one sex or the other.

13. A pipped egg is an egg that the turtle has broken through with its caruncle, but the turtle is not yet completely free from the shell.

14. Why does a depression form in the sand over the nest cavity? The movement of the newly-hatched turtles, crawling their way to the surface, causes the depression to form.

15. When (time of day/temperature) do hatchlings usually emerge? **at night, when the sand is cool**
16. The **swimming frenzy** usually lasts about three days. During this time, the turtles try to make it offshore to the Gulf Stream.
17. Even if an egg incubates and successfully hatches, only about **one out of every 10,000** hatchlings make it to become an adult sea turtle.
18. T / F: The lost years refers to the period between emergence from the nest and the return to coastal waters as juveniles, when the turtles are about three years old.
19. Many small turtles spend their first 15 years in the North Atlantic **gyre system**, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Sargasso Sea, which is not a true sea.
20. Sargassum provides good habitat for the small turtles because there is plenty of **protection** and **food** associated with the floating algal masses.
21. Most adult sea turtles travel thousands of miles through the world's oceans every year to **migrate** between foraging grounds, mating areas, and nesting beaches. They may live for 100 years or more!