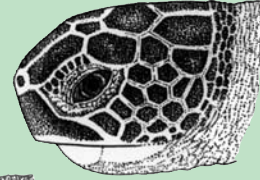


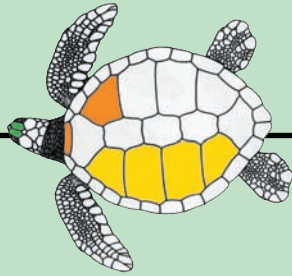
**Leatherback**  
*Dermochelys coriacea*

Leathery, no scutes;  
5 long ridges

**One pair prefrontal scutes**

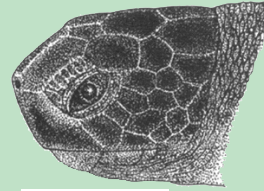


**Green**  
*Chelonia mydas*



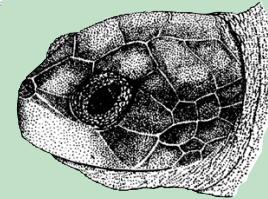
Restricted primarily to the eastern Pacific Ocean;  
Dark pigmentation

**Black\***



**4 costal (lateral) scutes;  
First costal scute does not touch nuchae**

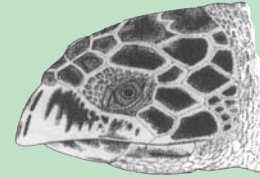
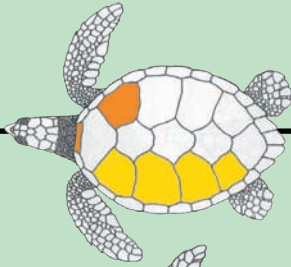
Found in tropical coastal waters of Australia;  
Carapace has upturned edges



**Flatback**  
*Natator depressus*

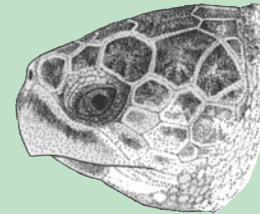
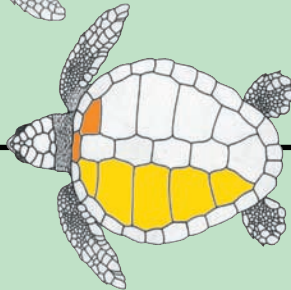
Hard carapace (shell) with large scutes (shell plates)

Two pairs prefrontal scutes; overlapping scutes



**Hawksbill**  
*Eretmochelys imbricata*

5 or 6 costal scutes; Carapace not circular

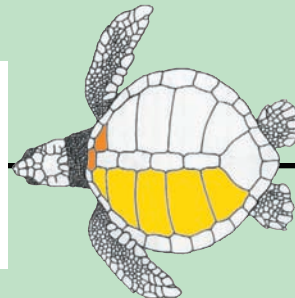


**Loggerhead**  
*Caretta caretta*

**5 or more costal (lateral) scutes;  
First costal scute touches nuchae**

Carapace wide and almost circular

5 costal scutes; Nearly circular



Restricted primarily to the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic coast of the USA

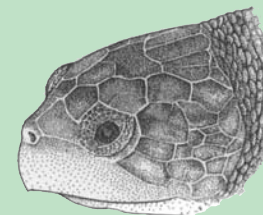


**Kemp's Ridley**  
*Lepidochelys kempii*

usu. 6 or more costal scutes



Found in tropical waters of the Pacific, Indian and South Atlantic Oceans



**Olive Ridley**  
*Lepidochelys olivacea*

# Species Descriptions

Last updated: 30 May 2005

## Common Name

## Spanish Name

## Scientific Name

### Leatherback

### Baula, Tortuga Laúd, Tora

### *Dermochelys coriacea*

**Color** dark gray/black with white spots

**Carapace**

tapered; leathery with 5 ridges

**Max Length** 165 - 190+ cm

**Plastron**

relatively small

**Max Weight** 400 - 500 kg

**Head**

tooth-like notch on either side of upper jaw; no scales

**Range** all oceans, subarctic to tropical; pelagic

### Green Turtle

### Tortuga Verde, Tortuga Blanca

### *Chelonia mydas*

**Color** J: radiating streaks; A: brown, buff

**Carapace**

4 costal scutes

**Max Length** 120 cm

**Plastron**

yellowish; 4 inframarginal scutes

**Max Weight** 230 kg

**Head**

round face; serrated jaw; 1 pair elongate prefrontal scales

**Range** all subtropical and tropical seas; bays and coastal waters

### Black Turtle\*

### Tortuga Negra, Prieta

### *Chelonia mydas*

**Color** black or grayish with black markings

**Carapace**

4 costal scutes

**Max Length** 90 cm

**Plastron**

cream to gray; 4 inframarginal scutes

**Max Weight** 150 kg

**Head**

round face; serrated jaw; 1 pair elongate prefrontal scales

**Range** East Pacific Ocean; bays and coastal waters

\*The status of the Black turtle or east Pacific green turtle, sometime referred to as *Chelonia agassizii* or *C. mydas agassizii*, remains uncertain. Recent genetic evidence supports an Atlantic-Mediterranean vs. Indian-Pacific grouping, while morphological and behavioral data suggest an east Pacific species or subspecies.

### Flatback Turtle

### Kikila, Tortuga Franca Oriental

### *Natator depressus*

**Color** olive grey

**Carapace**

4 costal scutes; broad and round; upturned margins

**Max Length** 100 cm

**Plastron**

yellowish; 4 inframarginal scutes

**Max Weight** 90 kg

**Head**

preocular scale; wide; flat; triangular

**Range** tropical coastal Australia

### Hawksbill Turtle

### Tortuga Carey

### *Eretmochelys imbricata*

**Color** amber and brown streaks

**Carapace**

4 costal scutes; (usually) overlapping scutes; oval

**Max Length** 90 - 110+ cm

**Plastron**

cream with dark blotches front and rear; 4 inframarginal scutes

**Max Weight** 80 kg

**Head**

curved beak; distinct overbite; 2 pair prefrontal scales

**Range** all oceans; tropical waters; reef areas

### Loggerhead

### Caguama, Amarilla, Cabezona, Tortuga Boba *Caretta caretta*

**Color** red brown to brown

**Carapace**

longer than wide; 5 or more costal scutes, first very small

**Max Length** 90 - 110 cm

**Plastron**

yellow to orange, 3 inframarginal scutes

**Max Weight** 100 - 180 kg

**Head**

large head; 4 or more prefrontal scales

**Range** all oceans; primarily temperate waters; near shore, often associate with structures (i.e., wrecks, platforms)

### Kemp's Ridley

### Tortuga Lora, Cotorra

### *Lepidochelys kempii*

**Color** gray to light olive green

**Carapace**

round; 5 (sometimes 6) costal scutes

**Max Length** 70 cm

**Plastron**

white to yellow; 4 inframarginal scutes with pores

**Max Weight** 40 - 50 kg

**Head**

triangular; relatively large; 2 pair prefrontal scales

**Range** Gulf of Mexico, eastern USA; coastal; < 16° N

### Olive Ridley

### Tortuga Golfina, Tortuga Olivacea, Parlama *Lepidochelys olivacea*

**Color** gray to olive green

**Carapace**

nearly round; 6 - 9 costal scutes, number may be asymmetrical

**Max Length** 70 - 80 cm

**Plastron**

cream/white; 4 inframarginal scutes with pores

**Max Weight** 45 - 60 kg

**Head**

triangular; relatively large; 2 pair prefrontal scales

**Range** tropical waters of Pacific, Indian and South Atlantic Oceans; pelagic

Produced in cooperation with:



Report sea turtles sighted during REEF surveys as an additional species on the back of your survey report form. Visit <<http://www.reef.org/data/seaturtle.htm>> for more information.

#### SUGGESTED REFERENCES

Bjorndal, KA (Editor). 1995. *Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles* (Revised Edition). Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.

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