

# Classroom Resources:



## Activity Ideas

**T**he following activity ideas are offered to help you use the information in this Guide in your classroom. We have tried to include activities that incorporate art, math, geography, political science, writing and biology. These activities can easily be modified for any grade level by adjusting the amount of detail.

### \* Draw the seven Species of Sea Turtles found Worldwide

Using the descriptions of the different species of sea turtles that begins on page 5 of the core booklet, try to draw a relatively accurate picture of each type of turtle. You can then visit the Sea Turtle Conservancy website and look in the section called "Sea Turtle Information" to compare your drawings to actual pictures of the different species.

### \* Compare Your Weight to That of a Sea Turtle

The average weights of the different sea turtle species are given on Pages 7 and 8 of the core booklet. Bring a weight scale to class and start weighing students one by one ~ keeping track of the cumulative weight. See how many students it takes to add up to the weight of a green turtle, leatherback or a Kemp's ridley. You can do the same sort of thing for length too.

### \* Guess Where the Turtles Being Tracked are Heading

Using the information presented throughout this Guide, try to guess where the turtles now being satellite tracked may be headed and how long it may take them to get there. You can post your guesses on the web page bulletin board. Here are a few useful clues:

*Clue #1:* In past years, researchers have marked many threatened loggerhead turtles in the Archie Carr Refuge with numbered flipper tags. These tags have been recovered in areas such as the Gulf of Mexico, Florida Bay, the Bahamas and Cuba.

*Clue #2:* Green turtles are herbivores, meaning they only eat plants. Their feeding grounds will be areas with lots of algae and sea grasses.

*Clue #3:* The average swimming rate of migrating green turtles in Hawaii has been documented at about 30 miles per day. Turtles nesting in Florida should be able to keep pace with that figure. Also, remember that satellite tagged female turtles will not return to nest for at least 2-3 years, so they have plenty of time to visit distant places before reaching their primary feeding ground.

### \* Create A Mythological Story About Sea Turtles

As described in "A Brief Overview: Turtles and Humans," sea turtles have long played a part in the mythology of many cultures. Mythological stories are often used by cultures to answer some of life's difficult questions. For instance, many Native American tribes believed the world began on the back of a giant turtle. For this exercise, you and your class can try to create your own mythological story about sea turtles. In the process, try to incorporate some of the facts contained in this guide, such as the fact that sea turtles travel all around the world's oceans. You could also try to come up with a mythological story to explain the role sea turtles are now playing in teaching humans about how we are treating the earth.

### \* Create a Sea Turtle Display for the Whole School to See

Use materials such as newspapers, papier mache and paint to create an educational display. It could focus on some of the threats sea turtles and coastal habitats face. You could even turn your classroom into a marine or coastal habitat! If you do create one, we would love to see a picture of the final product.

### **\* Prepare a Report on Sea Turtle Protection**

Decisions about how to protect sea turtles are made at many different government levels. Divide the class into 5 groups. Each group represents a different level of government; International, Federal, State, County or City. The group is responsible for making recommendations to protect sea turtles in their jurisdiction. Using the Educator's Guide, web sites and the library have the groups write and present (with visual aids) a report with information on how to protect sea turtles, who should be involved in the process and who should implement the plan.

### **\* Use Latitude & Longitude to Plot the Turtle Locations**

Download the blank migration map from the STC website and print it. It has latitude and longitude marks on the sides. Next, look at the maps showing the turtles' current locations and "estimate" the latitude and longitude of the most recent marks (or use data points if available, for some sea turtles we are not able to include the actual data points on the web page).

Then give those numbers to the class and have them plot the turtles' locations on the map you downloaded. *If you do not have the ability to download and print the map, you can use any map showing latitude and longitude or you can call the Sea Turtle Conservancy to request a blank copy for a small fee.*

### **\* Conduct a Mock Public Hearing Before Making a Decision on a Controversial Issue Affecting Sea Turtles**

Appoint five students to serve as county commissioners for a coastal county in Florida. The commission is meeting to hear from the public before deciding whether to approve the construction of a large new fishing pier. The only place the pier can be built is on a section of beach where thousands of sea turtles nest each summer. Divide the rest of the class into two groups ~ one that supports the pier because they want a place to fish and one opposed to the pier because they are concerned it will harm turtles and interfere with nesting. Have the two sides make short statements to the commission supporting their position, then let the commission make a vote.

*Here are some possible decisions they might choose from:*

- A. Do not allow the pier to be built.
- B. Approve the construction of the pier.
- C. Approve the pier, but place a number of restrictions on how it can be built and when it can be used. In this case, they would need to describe the restrictions.

**Note:** *Remind the commissioners that governmental decisions are often very complex, and politicians must balance their own beliefs and interests with the varied interests and concerns of the public they represent.*

### **\* Discuss the Role Different Countries Must Play in Protecting Sea Turtles**

Sea turtles that nest in the southeast U.S. travel all over the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. It is important that we protect them while they are here, but other countries must play a role when the turtles are in their waters. Which countries would need to help protect a loggerhead that nests in Florida and returns to the Caribbean coast of Panama to feed the rest of the year?

Watch the migration of the sea turtles on the Internet and discuss the name of the water bodies they travel through. Have students list the different countries they pass by (if they happen to leave U.S. waters).

### **\* Discuss the Threats the Satellite Tagged Turtles are Facing**

These adult sea turtles are traveling in the open ocean right now. As they travel to wherever their feeding areas are located, what are some of the human-caused threats they may be facing? What, if anything, can be done to eliminate these threats?

### **\* What Would a Sea Turtle Say to People**

Have students imagine they are a sea turtle that has been asked to give a speech to leaders of countries around the world. As a sea turtle, what would you want these people to know? Give the speech to the class.