

Resource: 8. A Turtle's Life

Appendix: 8.7 - Questions for the Introductory Brainstorming at the Beach

While students are moving the 'turtles' up onto the beach, digging and laying the eggs, brainstorm turtle facts by questioning. A turtle facts preparation session before the activity makes this quicker to go through and serve the purpose of introducing the main theme – marine litter.

1. Do turtles come up often on land?
They come up only to nest.
2. Are turtles feeling lighter in weight in sea or on land?
In the sea. Turtles that visit or nest in the Mediterranean can reach a weight of up to: Loggerhead: 160kg; Green Turtle: 160 kg; Leatherback: 700kg
3. Is it is easy for them to move on land?
No. They make a big effort to crawl on the beach by pushing the sand backwards with there flippers.
4. What do they do before they lay the eggs?
The turtle digs a hole with its flippers, with their back flippers. Digging and laying eggs can take up to 3 hours.
5. What do they do once they finish laying the eggs?
They cover the eggs with sand. The turtle nest is completely hidden.
6. Do they stay on the eggs until they hatch?
No they go back to the sea.
7. Is it because they are cruel that they leave the eggs/nest alone?
No, it's a turtle's life! The eggs do not need their mother to form into hatchlings, grow and hatch. They are solitary. The eggs are warmed by the sand which is in turn warmed by the rays of the sun. The eggs on top tend to become warmer and develop into females. The bottom cooler ones develop into males. Global warming may be causing a greater percentage of eggs to develop into females and their number may outweigh the male turtles, Because of this scientists predict that in the future there may not be enough males around for mating.
8. How many eggs do they lay?
Clutches of around hundred or more are laid. The same turtle can lay eggs more than once in one summer. Even up to five times!
9. How long do they take to hatch?
Around 2 months. They usually hatch at night and follow the moonlight to reach the sea.
10. What can happen until they reach the sea?
If there is artificial light the hatchling might get lost on the beach, and it can be eaten by predators like the ghost crab or birds.

11. What can happen once they reach the sea?

They are prey for sea predators too and some can be eaten by sea birds or big fish.

12. What can happen while still growing up?

There are many dangers. Besides the chance of being eaten by big fish and sea birds, they can be hit by boats/ships, get entangled in discarded nets and ropes, or eat plastic items and get sick.

13. How long do they take to grow up?

The Loggerhead has to reach at least over 20 years of age before it can start laying eggs. It is known to go back up on the beach from where it hatched to lay her eggs.

14. Do they die only because of predators?

No. They can also get sick or injured.

15. What can cause them to get sick or injured?

The reasons include human activities like plastic trash, lost fishing gear and being hit by boats.

16. How many hatchlings survive till maturity?

About 1 in 1000!

17. Is it worthwhile to make huge efforts to save one single turtle?

Definitely worthwhile and necessary!