Turtle
Coloring and Activity Book

Art and Text
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Turtles, Terrapins, and Tortoises

What is the difference between a turtle, a terrapin, and a tortoise? In the U.S., they are all called turtles, but there are differences.

Turtles that are totally terrestrial (live on land) and do not need constant access to water are referred to as tortoises. Tortoises usually have high domed shells and legs that resemble the legs of elephants. They eat plants and grow very slowly. The giant Galapagos tortoises weigh hundreds of pounds and live for over 100 years. The smaller gopher tortoise, once common in the eastern U.S., is now endangered.

Terrapins are turtles that live in brackish water (slightly salty). The diamondback terrapin, once abundant along the Gulf Coast, is now a species of concern. Terrapins are still fished along the Eastern Seaboard, but populations are decreasing and measures have been put in place to limit their harvest to insure survival.

There are many other species of turtles; some live in freshwater environments and others live in the ocean. The common box turtle lives on land but needs access to water. Sea turtles have streamlined bodies and webbed flipper-like feet that allow them to swim easily for long distances. While sea turtles live most of their lives in the ocean, females return to land to lay their eggs. All species of sea turtles in the U.S. are protected under the Endangered Species Act.
New born turtles are called hatchlings.

**Body Parts**

Trivia: Turtles live everywhere on earth except the Arctic and Antarctica.
New born turtles are called hatchlings.
Hawksbill Sea Turtle

The Hawksbill sea turtle can weigh up to 270 pounds and grow to be three feet in length. The head is long and narrow compared to that of other turtles. The narrow head and powerful jaws like a beak allow it to pick food from crevices in coral reefs. They feed on sea anemones, sponges, shrimp and squid.

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle

The Kemp's Ridley sea turtle is the smallest and most endangered of all sea turtles. Adults weigh anywhere from 85 to 100 pounds and measure 24 to 30 inches in length. Their diet consists mostly of crabs, but they also eat shrimp, clams, jellyfish and fish.
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Loggerhead Sea Turtle

Loggerhead sea turtles are named for their extremely large head. They have very powerful jaws which help them crush hard-shell prey like whelks and conchs. Their shell is heart-shaped and reddish brown in color.
The Green sea turtle is the largest of all the hard-shelled sea turtles, even though they have the smallest head. Their name is derived from the color of their fat; it is green from eating on sea grass and algae.
Red-Eared Slider Turtle

The Red-eared Slider is the most recognized turtle. This slider gets its name from the broad red stripe behind its eye. They are found in freshwater ponds, streams, creeks and marshes. They feed on plant and animal material.
Mississippi Map Turtles

The Ringed map turtle is restricted to the Pearl River and its tributaries in Mississippi and Louisiana. This turtle gets its name from the broad light rings in its shell.

The Yellow-blotched map turtle is found in the Pascagoula River and its tributaries.
Trivia: The largest freshwater turtle in the U.S. is the alligator snapping turtle.

Common Snapping Turtle

The Common Snapping turtle is the largest fresh water turtle. It has a large head and very strong jaws. An adult can reach up to 70 pounds but normally weighs about 35 pounds. Their legs are very powerful, heavily scaled, and have webbed feet with long claws. They feed on plant and animal material and have been known to eat small mammals and ducks.
Trivia: Some American box turtles have been documented to be over 100 years old.

**Eastern Box Turtle**

The Eastern Box turtle is the most common turtle in the Southeastern United States. Box turtles live in a variety of habitats from swamps, wooded areas, and grassy fields. Box turtles will eat almost anything, even poisonous mushrooms that are toxic to humans.
Diamondback Terrapin

The Diamondback Terrapin is named for the diamond patterns on its shell. They have black spots and wiggly marks on their skin. Diamondbacks spend most of their time in water and only come out to lay eggs and bask in the sun. They inhabit tidal marshes, estuaries, and lagoons and feed on snails, clams, crabs and plants.
Trivia: The largest giant tortoise raised in captivity is reported to weigh 882 pounds.

The Gopher tortoise is only one of four species of tortoise native to North America. An adult gopher tortoise averages ten inches in length and weighs around nine pounds. They are found throughout the Southeastern United States and are known for their digging ability. The gopher tortoise is federally protected as a threatened species, except in Mississippi, where it is listed by the state as endangered.
ACROSS
5 Is the largest living turtle and is placed in it’s on family.
9 Has a red broader strip behind their eye.
10 Has diamond patterns on it’s shell.
11 Eats on sea grasses and algae, which give them a greenish colored fat.
12 Is the smallest and most endangered sea turtle.

DOWN
1 Is found in the Pascagoula River.
2 Named for it’s rather large head.
3 Has a beak like mouth.
4 Looks like a pancake with legs and a head.
6 Most common turtle in the south eastern Untied States.
7 The largest fresh water turtle.
8 Is found in the Pearl River of Mississippi.
Trivia: Leatherback sea turtles can grow to six feet in length and weigh up to 1,300 pounds.

Leatherback Turtle

The Leatherback turtle is the largest living turtle. It is placed in its own family, called Dermochelys, because it's so distinctive. The leatherback travels the farthest, dives the deepest, and ventures into the coldest waters.
The Gulf Coast Spiny Softshell turtle has a sandpaper like texture on their leathery shell. Softshells sometimes look like pancakes with legs and a head. They have a long neck and tubular nose like a snorkel. They inhabit lakes, ponds, streams and rivers and feed on aquatic insects, crayfish and mollusks.

Gulf Coast Spiny Softshell

The Gulf Coast Spiny Softshell turtle has a sandpaper like texture on their leathery shell. Softshells sometimes look like pancakes with legs and a head. They have a long neck and tubular nose like a snorkel. They inhabit lakes, ponds, streams and rivers and feed on aquatic insects, crayfish and mollusks.
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Turtle Cross

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Word Scramble

Uettlr

Ehils

Der deera Idsrei

Ppisang terlut

Esa ruttel

Sateenr oxb

Ondidamkoba

Liwhsakb

Lbeeracthak

Ysnpi tosfesihi

Enegr ase trluet

Gnrdei prma elttur

Mpske dyeridl

Gglolearhe
Turtle Search

DIAMONDBACK
HAWSBILL
RINGEDMAP
SNAPPINGTURTLE

EASTERNBOX
LEATHERBACK
SEATURTLE
SPINYSOFTSHELL

GREENSEATURTLE
REDEAREDSLIDER
SHELL
TURTLE
Identifying sea turtles by the shells.
Identifying sea turtles by the shells.
Turtle Shell Project

- Paper Plate
- Construction Paper
- Scissors
- Glue/ Tape

Instructions:

- Cut out shapes and designs using the construction paper. Make your own shell by gluing or taping your colored shapes on to the paper plate. Be creative!

- Then cut out two legs and two arms using the construction paper and then cut out one head and one tail. Glue or tape the head, tail, arms, and legs to the paper plate.
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Word Scramble

Turtle
Shell
Red-eared slider
Snapping turtle
Sea turtle
Eastern Box
Diamondback
Hawksbill
Leatherback
Spiny Softshell
Green Sea Turtle
Ringed Map Turtle
Kemp’s Ridley
Loggerhead

Turtle Cross

ACROSS

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6 Has a red breaker strip behind their eye.
7 Has diamond patterns on its shell.
8 Eats on sea grasses and algae, which give them a greenish-colored fat.
9 In the smallest and most endangered sea turtle.

DOWN

1 Is found in the Penanggah River.
2 Named for its rather large head.
3 Has a mouth like a mouth.
4 Looks like a pan of a shell with legs and a head.
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6 The largest freshwater turtle.
7 Is found in the Pearl River of Mississippi.

Turtle Search

EASTERN BOX
LEATHERBACK
SEA TURTLE
SPINY TURTLE
DIAMOND TURTLE
GREEN SEA TURTLE
KEMP'S RIDLEY
☑️