

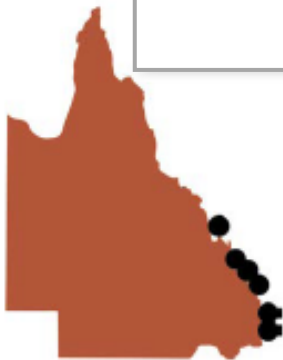
The Loggerhead Turtle

General information

- nests at Mon Repos from November to March
- is endangered
- has a carapace (shell)
- scientific name is *Caretta caretta*
- one of seven turtle species in the world (Green, Hawksbill, Kemp's Ridley, Olive Ridley, Leatherback, Flatback)
- lay eggs in the sand, warm sand -female, cold sand -male
- females lay over 100 ping-pong ball size eggs per clutch
- about 6 weeks incubation in egg chamber before hatch
- about one in one thousand hatchlings survive to adulthood
- artificial glow (city light) disorients hatchlings and adult turtles
- turtle tracks are alternate stroke



Habitat



Qld Nesting Sites

- worldwide distribution in coastal tropical and subtropical waters
- coral reefs, bays and estuaries in tropical and warm temperate waters off the coast of Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and New South Wales
- travel vast distances from their nesting beaches
- hatchlings from Mon Repos disperse as far as South America
- spend 16 years at sea before returning

Description



Hatchling



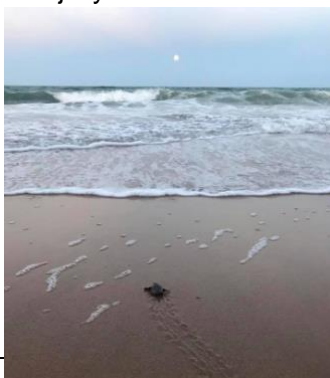
Adult

Large head with strong jaws, parrot-like beak

- dark brown, sometimes irregularly speckled with darker brown
- top of head is dark brown, pale on sides white, cream or yellowish underside
- hatchlings are rich reddish-brown above, dark blackish-brown under
- head of old adults is large
- shell is elongated heart-shaped with five costal scales on each side of the carapace
- head and body length can reach 1.5m

Diet

- carnivorous (eats animals)
- eats shellfish, crabs, sea urchins, and jellyfish



Predators

- fox, dingo, feral pigs, and goanna eat turtle eggs and hatchlings
- other threats: vehicles compacting turtle nests, humans taking turtle eggs, bycatch in fishing nets, marine debris- caught in fishing line and nets, plastic bags and balloons look like jellyfish, coastal development, artificial lighting, water quality, turtle harvesting, crab pots, boat strike, climate change affecting nesting sand temperatures with changes in hatchling male: female ratios, extreme weather events, erosion of nesting sites.

Foxes



Cut the Glow
to help turtles go



Pollution

Writing an informative text – TEXT 2

Loggerhead turtles are one of the seven sea turtles of the world. Their scientific name is *Caretta caretta* and they are an endangered species. They are reptiles and can live for more than 50 years. Loggerhead turtles live in oceans all around the world, except in the coldest seas far north and south, near the Earth's poles.

Their name originates from their oversized head, which looks a bit like a big log. They have a large, reddish-brown, hard shell, or 'carapace', a pale yellow underbelly, or 'plastron', and four flippers with two, or sometimes three, claws on each. They leave alternate flipper marks in the sand.

Loggerhead turtles are omnivores, but mostly jellyfish, molluscs and crustaceans. They mostly feast on other ocean animals. Using their strong, powerful jaws, they crush and munch on crunchy critters such as clams, crabs, mussels and sea urchins. They also eat softer foods, too, including jellyfish, some types of fish and occasionally seaweed and brown algae called 'sargassum'.

A female turtle may travel over 12,000km between their feeding grounds and their breeding-nesting sites back to the beach where she hatched as a baby. It's on this very same beach that she lays her own eggs as an adult.

When a female is ready to lay her eggs, she comes ashore and uses her front flippers to clear a spot in the dry sand. She then uses her hind flippers to dig her nesting hole or 'chamber', before laying the eggs. The eggs hatch about 6 to 8 weeks later, and the new tiny turtles immediately make their way up through the sand, and wait just underneath the surface layer until nightfall. Once cooler temperatures signal that the sun has set, the hatchlings pop up and scurry toward the ocean, trying to avoid predators such as foxes, crabs, snakes and birds along the way.

A serious threat to Loggerheads is accidental capture in fishing equipment such as nets, along with pollution, destruction to their nesting beaches, and artificial lighting.

Mon Repos supports the largest concentration of nesting marine turtles on the eastern Australian mainland. It is the most significant loggerhead turtle nesting population in the South Pacific Ocean region.

Definitions:

Reptile : cold-blooded animal (as a snake, lizard, turtle, or alligator) that breathes air and usually has the skin covered with scales or bony plates

Carapace : the hard upper shell of a turtle, crustacean, or arachnid

Caretta caretta : scientific name for Loggerhead turtle

Sargassum : a brown seaweed with berrylike air bladders, typically forming large floating masses

Chamber : the hole a female turtle digs to lay her eggs

Plastron : underbelly

Omnivores : an animal or person that eats food of both plant and animal origin