

For Creative Minds

Loggerhead Nesting Fun Facts:

Field signs of a nest:

- ingoing and outgoing tracks
- body pit
- thrown sand
- broken vegetation
- a departing scarp in sand where she turned

On average, the loggerhead lays four nests a summer about two weeks apart.

She lays between 80 and 150 eggs in each nest. *If she lays 100 eggs in each nest and lays four nests in the summer, how many eggs will she lay?*

The sea turtle lays so many eggs to make sure that some of the hatchlings will survive.

The eggs look like ping-pong balls! They are leathery so they won't break when they are laid in the nest.

She doesn't lay eggs every year. She lays nests every two or three years.

After laying all of her eggs, she returns to the sea and will never see or know the hatchlings.

Female sea turtles return to the same area where they hatched to lay their eggs.

Scientists don't know how the turtles find their way "home" to lay their eggs but think that the hatchlings "imprint" the area when they walk from the nest to the ocean. For that reason, it is important to let the hatchlings walk across the beach and not carry them.



If people make loud noises, shine flashlights on the beach, or try to get close to and touch the sea turtle as she comes ashore, she may turn around and leave without nesting. If you are lucky enough to see a sea turtle coming out of the ocean, be quiet and stay at a distance. Don't turn on your flashlight! Let your eyes adapt to the night light.

Sometimes ghost crabs or ants will harm the eggs in the nest.

The mother turtle or the hatchlings might have a difficult time going around sand castles or big holes dug in the sand. If you play in the sand at the beach, smooth it all out before you leave. *Remember; only leave your footprints on the beach!*

Sea turtles find their way to the ocean by moving toward the brightest, most open horizon, which under natural conditions is toward the ocean. Bright lights may cause the turtles to crawl the wrong way to certain death. If you are at the beach, turn off the outside lights and pull curtains down at night to keep the beach dark.

Sea turtles like to eat jellyfish and sometimes mistake floating plastic for a jellyfish. Would you get sick if you ate a plastic bag or a deflated balloon? Pick up all plastic and trash - even if you are not close to the ocean.

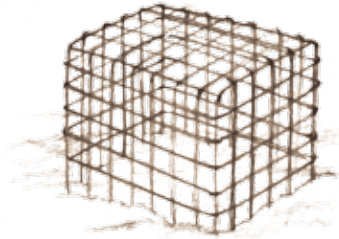


Items Needed During Turtle Nesting Matching Activity

Match the items needed during turtle nesting season. Answers are upside down on the bottom of the page.

1. These mark the nest to let people know not to disturb it or walk on it.
2. If we have to move the nest to a better spot, we use this to hold the eggs as we move them.
3. This protects the nest from raccoons or other animals that might try to dig up the eggs. The holes are big enough for the hatchlings to get out but not for the other animals to get in.
4. If we have to move a nest, we use this to help us dig a new nest, just like the female loggerhead.
5. The red lens helps us to use this at night without bothering the sea turtles.

a



b



c



d



e



1-d, 2-e, 3-a, 4-b, 5-c

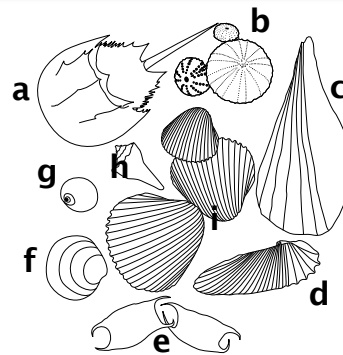


Shell Identification

Can you identify the shells? Answers are upside down, below.



- 1 Pen Shell
- 2 Urchins
- 3 Cockle Shells
- 4 Clam Shell
- 5 Angel Wing Shell
- 6 Whelk Shell
- 7 Skate's Egg Purses
- 8 Molted Horseshoe Crab Shell
- 9 Moon Snail



1-c, 2-b, 3-1, 4-f 5-d, 6-h, 7-e, 8-a, 9-g



Make Your Own Nature Scrapbook

Find a spot outdoors to sit and observe nature; a park, the beach, a lake, the woods – it can even be your own backyard.

Look around. Write down the words that describe what you see.

What type of day is it?

Is it windy, sunny, or cloudy? Has it just rained or snowed? Is it hot or cold?

What time of day is it? Is it early morning, noon, late afternoon or evening?

Do you know the name of that plant or bird or flower? If you don't, be careful when you describe or draw it. You can look up the name when you get home.

- What color is it?
- What size is it?
- What shapes (circles, triangles, rectangles) are there in the bird beaks, feathers, leaves, shells, rocks, or sticks, etc.?
- Is it smooth, rough, hard, soft, slimy, or scaly?
- Now close your eyes and let your other senses take over.
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What do you feel?

Now open your eyes and write everything down.

Your observation is done! Now you are ready to go back home and gather your thoughts into sentences and write or draw in your nature notebook.

If you want, add clippings, pressed flowers, leaves, etc. Photographs are fun, too!

Food for thought: Would your observations change at different times of the day or if the weather was different? If you can, try to observe the same thing at different times of the day or at the same time over several different days. Are your observations the same or different? Why or why not?

