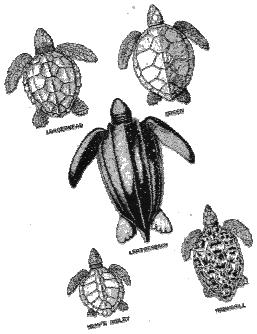
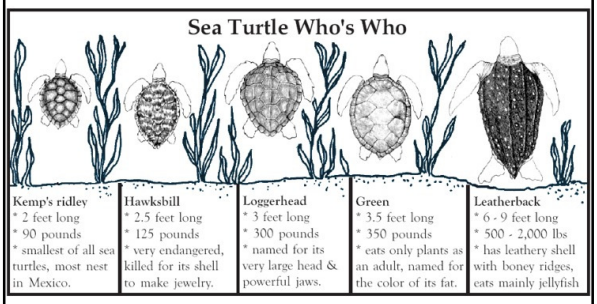
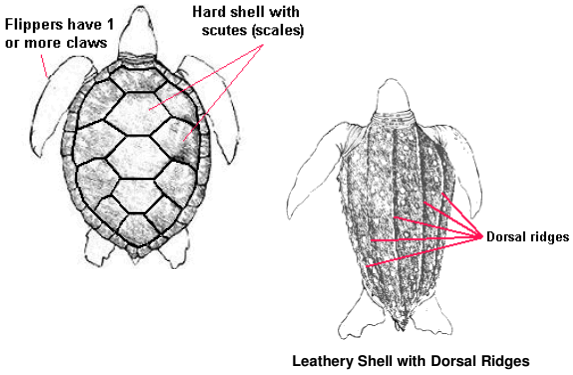
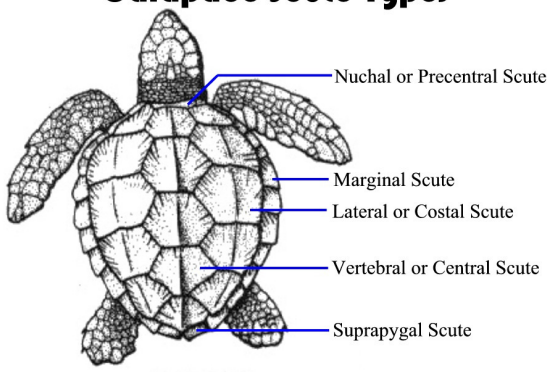
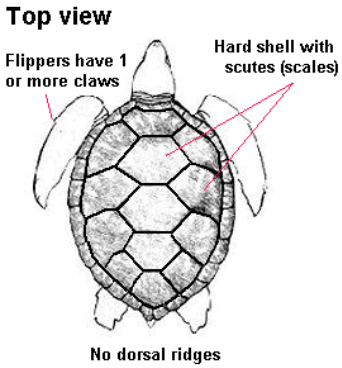


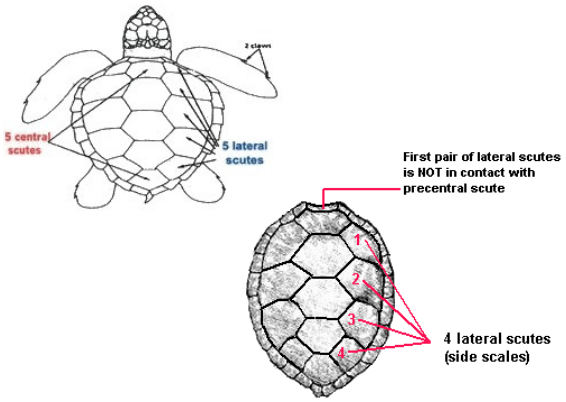
# Differentiating between the Atlantic Coast Sea Turtles

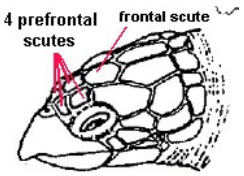


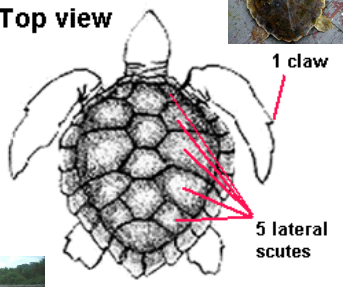






## Kemps Ridley

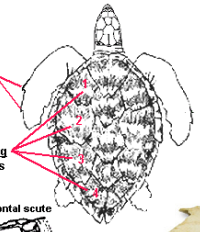
Top view

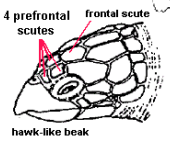


•Most endangered of all sea turtles, nest in one major breeding ground (Rancho Nuevo, Mexico) in synchronized nestings (all at once) called "Arribadas". Carapace is olive green & Plastron is yellowish.

## Hawksbill

Top view



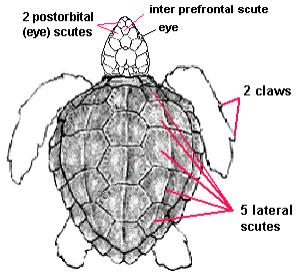



Head

•Most often killed for their ornate shells. ($50-$100 /lb. for the shell.)
Carapace is generally brown with orange, brown, yellow splashes and overlapping scutes.

## Loggerhead

Top view



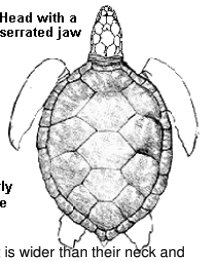
•Loggerheads have a very large head and it is the same width as their neck.
•They have a reddish-brown carapace and a dull brownish-yellowish plastron.
•Body tends to have a heart shape look.

## Green

Head with a serrated jaw

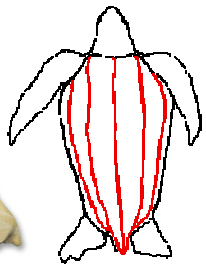
Top view

Body is nearly oval in shape

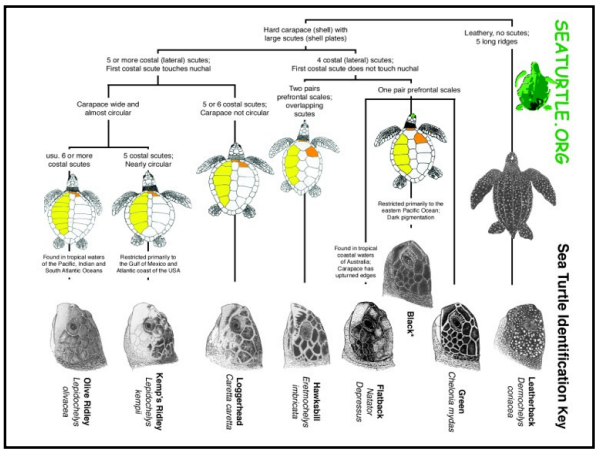


•Similar to Loggerheads, but have a smaller head and it is wider than their neck and have 4 lateral scutes.
They also have only one set of prefrontal scutes.
Body is nearly oval.
Have a serrated jaw.
Carapace varies in color from pink to dark green and solid to radiating stripes of brown, green and yellow tones.
Plastron is a white to yellow color in the Atlantic area (gray to blue green in Pacific).

## Leatherback



•The only sea turtle without a hard shell with scutes.
•Usually a dark gray to black color with whitish sploches.


SEATURTLE.ORG
Sea Turtle Identification Key
Leathery, no scutes; 5 long ridges
Hard carapace (shell) with large scutes (shell plates)
5 or more costal (lateral) scutes; First costal scute touches nuchal
4 costal (lateral) scutes; First costal scute does not touch nuchal
Carapace wide and almost circular
5 or 6 costal scutes; Carapace not circular
Two pairs prefrontal scales; overlapping scutes
One pair prefrontal scales
usu. 6 or more costal scutes
5 costal scutes; Nearly circular
Found in tropical waters of the Pacific, Indian and South Atlantic Oceans
Restricted primarily to the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic coast of the USA
Restricted primarily to the eastern Pacific Ocean; Dark pigmentation
Found in tropical coastal waters of Australia; Carapace has upturned edges
Leatherback Dermochelys coriacea
Green Chelonia mydas
Black*
Flatback Natator Depressus
Hawksbill Eretmochelys imbricata
Loggerhead Caretta caretta
Kemp's Ridley Lepidochelys kempii
Olive Ridley Lepidochelys olivacea