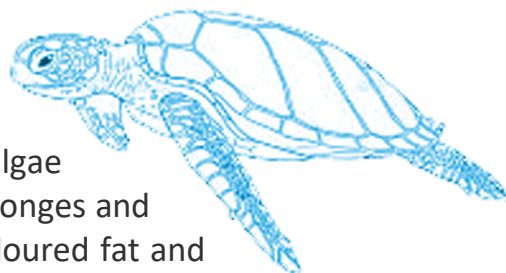


Green Sea Turtle Facts

About

I'm unique among my fellow sea turtle species—I'm one of the largest species of turtle *and* am the only turtle that is strictly herbivorous as an adult. I eat sea grasses and algae (although juvenile green sea turtles will also eat crabs, sponges and jellyfish), which might be the reason I have the green-coloured fat and cartilage that give me my name. I have a hard protective shell, but unlike land turtles, I can't pull my head and flippers inside to protect myself.



Sometimes I can get entangled in marine debris like fishing nets or plastic strapping bands, which could cause me to drown. And I often mistake other debris like plastic bags or little plastic fragments as food. Additionally, I'm at risk from poachers who sell our meat and shells internationally—an estimated 30,000 green sea turtles are poached every year in Baja California alone. We are also prone to a tumour disease that can kill us. All of that combined means we're officially endangered in the wild.

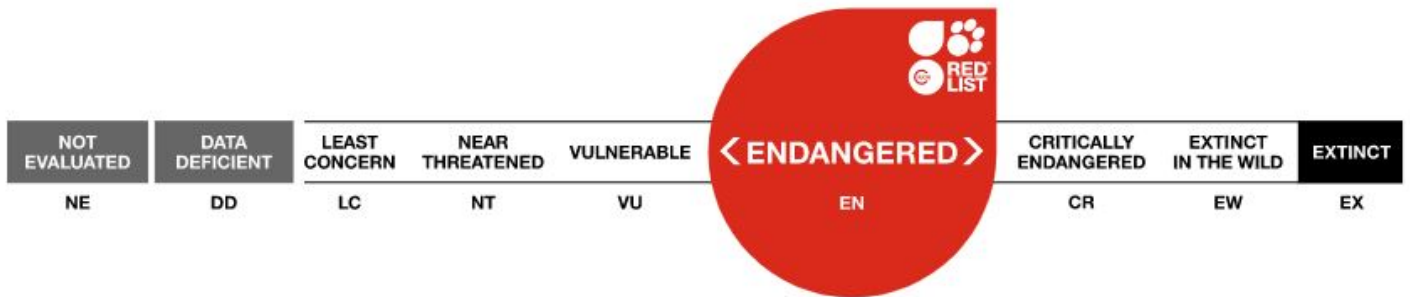
Like humans, I breathe oxygen. Unlike humans, I can spend up to two hours underwater before I need to come up to the surface to breathe. I can also drink salt water by excreting the extra salt through "salt glands" behind my eyes. So, if I seem like I'm crying, don't worry—I am just getting rid of salt!

Call me sentimental, but I like to nest on the same beach where I hatched. I don't reach sexual maturity until I am at *least* 20 years old, and I use earth's magnetic forces to navigate my way home (cool, right?). At night, I crawl up onto the beach and lay somewhere between 85-200 eggs under the sand. After two months, the juvenile sea turtles will emerge to dodge predators like birds and crabs in a mad dash to the ocean. Surviving to adulthood is hard enough, and climate change is making it even harder. Rising sea levels could flood nesting beaches and make it harder for females to lay their eggs. Additionally, temperature impacts the sex of the eggs—cooler eggs produce males and warmer eggs produce females. If the average temperature of the nests increases, we will see a disproportionate number of females to males, making it harder to find mates.



Green Sea Turtle Facts

Status and Conservation



Green turtles are classified by IUCN as “Endangered”, meaning that these species meet a specific series of criteria, including “an observed, estimated, inferred or suspected reduction of at least 50% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer.

Fast Facts

I can live to be 80 years old but I need to stay close to the sunny warm waters, near the surface or laying on land to soak up the rays. This means you will find me in tropical and subtropical waters near the coastline. My favourite food is sea grasses and algae.

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