



Sea Turtle Activity

Learning about the life history and threats that affect sea turtles can give us a better understanding of how to protect them, whether personally or through an organized network. A hands-on activity is preceded by an introduction to sea turtles in Florida, as well as their life history and threats. Students work in groups, acting as members of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN), collecting “data” on carapace measurements, location found, etc.

Grade Level: 5th-6th grade

Timing: 1 hour

Concepts Covered:

- Identification of 5 species of sea turtles
- Sea turtle life cycle
- Current threats to sea turtles
- Solutions to the proposed threats
- Sea turtle data collection

Vocabulary: reptile, threatened, endangered, ectothermic, carapace, plastron, scutes, scales, TED, calipers, bycatch, poaching

Resources: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/sea-turtle-stranding-and-salvage-network>, <https://www.turtlehospital.org/>

Extensions: Visit the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, FL- ask staff for details

Standards Supported:

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

SC.5.L.17.1: Compare and contrast adaptations displayed by animals and plants that enable them to survive in different environments such as life cycles variations, animal behaviors and physical characteristics.

SC.6.N.1.5: Recognize that science involves creativity, not just in designing experiments, but also in creating explanations that fit evidence.

SC.912.L.17.8: Recognize the consequences of the losses of biodiversity due to catastrophic events, climate changes, human activity, and the introduction of invasive, non-native species.

Ocean Literacy Principles

Principle 5. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.

d. Ocean biology provides many unique examples of life cycles, adaptations and important relationships among organisms (symbiosis, predator-prey dynamics, and energy transfer) that do not occur on land.

Principle 6. The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.

d. Humans affect the ocean in a variety of ways. Laws, regulations and resource management affect what is taken out and put into the ocean. Human development and activity leads to pollution (point source, non-point source, and noise pollution), changes to ocean chemistry (ocean acidification) and physical modifications (changes to beaches, shores and rivers). In addition, humans have removed most of the large vertebrates from the ocean.

g. Everyone is responsible for caring for the ocean. The ocean sustains life on Earth and humans must live in ways that sustain the ocean. Individual and collective actions are needed to effectively manage ocean resources for all.