

# Sea Turtle Activity

**Grade Level:** 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Timing:** 1 hour

**Summary:** 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.

## Program Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe the life cycle of a sea turtle and the associated threats
- Name 3 solutions for protecting sea turtles
- Experience participating in a mock sea turtle rescue

## 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

**Procedures:** 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). A data sheet used by the STSSN is filled out describing the turtle found, location, and circumstances surrounding the discovery of the turtle. Short video of STSSN volunteers in action during a turtle stranding is shown.



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# Standards Addressed:

## *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.



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