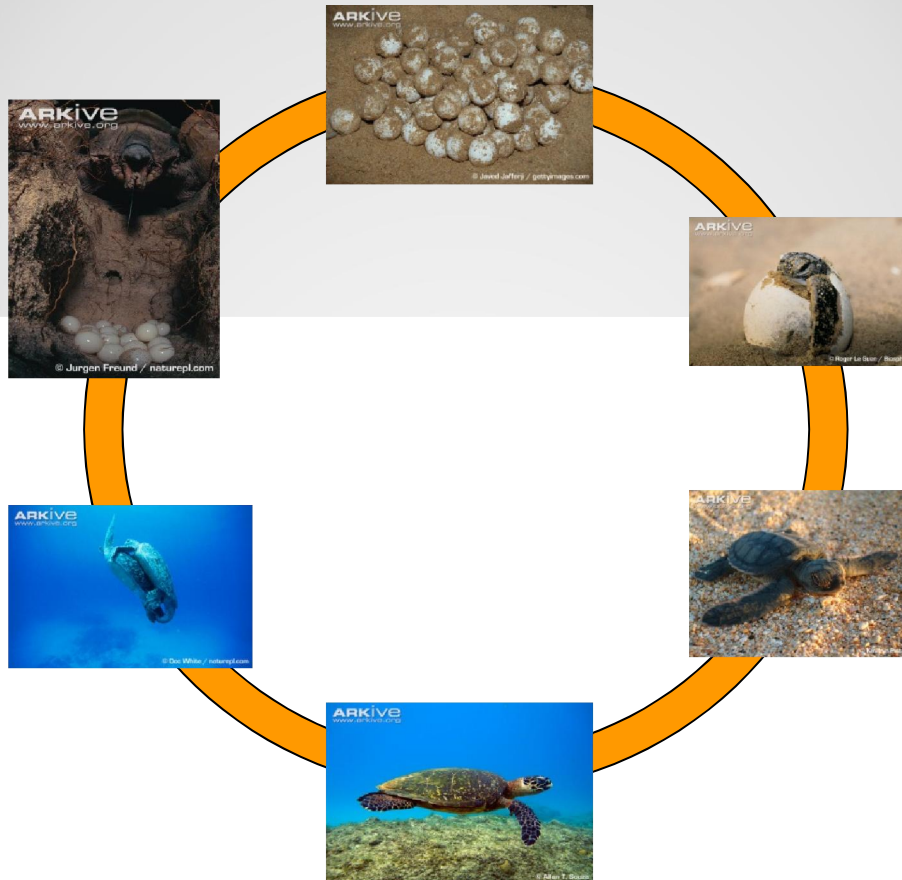


Turtle Life Cycle



What is a life cycle?

- The different stages an animal or plant goes through during its life.
- What stages might this include?
 - Birth or germination
 - Development
 - Reproduction



Mammals

Most mammals have very similar life cycles, with the individuals going through similar stages of development:

- Female gives birth to young
- Young looks like a miniature version of the adult
- Female provides milk for the young to grow and develop
- Adults take care of the young
- Reproduce



Reptiles

What do you think might be different about the life cycle of reptiles, when compared with the life cycle of mammals? What might be the same?

- Most reptiles lay eggs
- Young looks like a miniature version of

Generally, no parental care is given – the eggs/young are left to look after themselves



Sea turtle life cycle

- Which group do sea turtles belong to? REPTILES
- What does this tell us about their life cycle?

Sexual reproduction

No parental care

Lay eggs

Young are miniature versions of adults



Sea turtles

- There are seven different species of sea turtle



Flatback
turtle



Loggerhead
turtle



Leatherback
turtle



Hawksbill
turtle



Olive ridley
turtle



Kemp's ridley
turtle

...and the GREEN TURTLE!



Green turtle

Why are they called green turtles? → Because their fat is green in colour!

Female green turtles can lay between 100 and 150 eggs per clutch, and usually lay several clutches per breeding season.



Some populations of green turtle migrate thousands of kilometres to feed and breed. Part of the Brazilian population migrates 2,250 kilometres to breed near Ascension Island in the South Atlantic!

Green turtles can live a very long time! Scientists are not sure exactly how long, but it is thought that it could be up to 100 years or more

Starts off as an egg



Green turtle life cycle



Green turtle life cycle

Egg Stage

- Eggs are incubated in the nest for 45 to 70 days
- The temperature affects the gender of the young:
 - Lower temperatures produce males
 - Higher temperatures produce females
 - Middle temperatures produce males and females



Threats

- Eggs being taken by humans for food
- Feral/wild pigs and domestic dogs digging up the nest
- The nest getting flooded



Starts off as an
egg



Green turtle life cycle



Hatchling
emerges
from egg



Hatchling
makes its
way to
the sea



Green turtle life cycle

Hatchling stage

- Hatchlings look like miniature adults
- Hatchlings get no parental care
- Hatchlings head towards the lighter horizon, which will be over the sea



Threats

- Predators – gulls and crabs on the beach, and fish and sharks once the hatchlings reach the sea
- Artificial lighting – hatchlings head towards that instead of the sea



Starts off as an egg



Hatchling emerges from egg



Hatchling makes its way to the sea

Hatchling grows into a juvenile and then into an adult



Green turtle life cycle

Juvenile stage

Where do juveniles go?

- Nobody really knows! Scientists have yet to figure out exactly where they go between the hatchling and juvenile stages – it's a mystery!
- End up in feeding areas – exact location not known

Threats

- Eating plastic bags – the turtles think the bags are jellyfish
- Fishing nets and lines



Starts off as an egg



Hatchling emerges from egg



Hatchling makes its way to the sea



Hatchling grows into a juvenile and then into an adult



When the turtles reach sexual maturity they mate and reproduce



Green turtle life cycle

Adult stage

- Can start having children from 26 – 40 years old
- Migrate from feeding grounds to breeding grounds
- Breeding ground is the beach where they hatched
- Males and females mate just offshore
- Males return to feeding grounds

Threats

- Getting caught in fishing lines and drowning
- Sharks



Starts off as an egg



Hatchling emerges from egg



Hatchling travels to the sea



Hatchling grows into a juvenile and then into an adult



Green turtle life cycle

Female turtles crawl onto the beach to lay their own eggs



When the turtles reach sexual maturity they mate and reproduce



Egg laying

- Female crawls onto the beach at night to lay eggs
- Female uses its back flippers to dig a nest
- Female may come up onto the beach up to nine times per nesting season to lay eggs
- Once several clutches of eggs have been laid, female returns to feeding grounds



Threats

- Beach pollution
- Noise and

Starts off as an egg



Female turtles crawl onto the beach to lay their own eggs



Green turtle life cycle

Hatchling emerges from egg



Hatchling travels to the sea



Hatchling grows into a juvenile and then into an adult



When the turtles reach sexual maturity they mate and reproduce

