

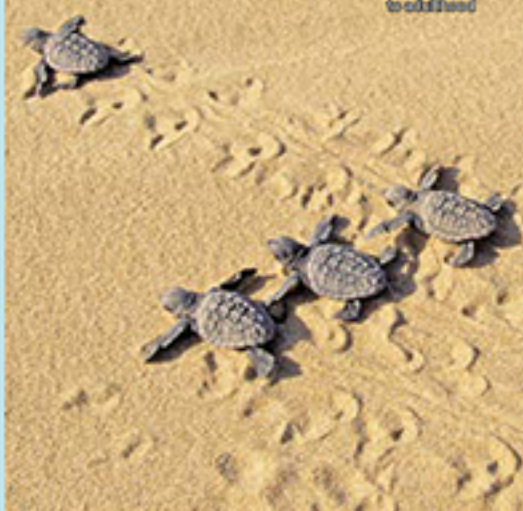
A helping hand for hatchlings

The little eggs should be ready to hatch in 45–55 days, and then the baby loggerheads will face their first challenge – finding the sea! To do this, the 4-cm hatchlings follow the moonlight, so it's important that people who live nearby turn off or shield their lights at night. Otherwise, the hatchlings get confused and head in the wrong direction! Local people can also help the baby turtles – and their mums – by making sure there are no extra obstacles in the way, such as beach furniture or rubbish. Once they reach the water, evading any hungry predators such as crabs, the teeny turtles head to the open ocean. When they're older they'll move to shallower feeding grounds. Males spend their entire life at sea, while females migrate between foraging grounds and nesting beaches.

All sea turtles have a special 'egg tooth' that helps them break out of their shells.



Only one in 1,000 hatchlings will survive to adulthood.



TYPES OF TURTLE

Meet four other turtle-amazing species found in Florida

Green

Green sea turtles don't have green shells – they're named for the colour of their fat, which is thought to be green because of all the vegetation they eat! Their cute 5-cm hatchlings are black.



Hawksbill

Found in tropical waters all over the world, this beautiful sea turtle has been hunted for hundreds of years for its shell and is now critically endangered. It's named for its hooked, hawk-like beak, which is perfect for grabbing sea sponges out of the coral reefs where it lives.



Kemp's ridley

One of the world's teeniest sea turtles, the Kemp's ridley can be identified by its parrot-like beak. Sadly, it's the most critically endangered marine turtle in the world.



Leatherback

Meet the world's most massive marine turtle, which can weigh over 900kg – that's heavier than a smart car! Leatherbacks have a tough skin over their shell – hence their name – instead of the external bony plates of other species. They spend most of their lives gobbling jellyfish in open oceans all over the world.

TURTLE HOSPITAL



If any sick or injured turtles are spotted on the beaches of Sarasota Bay, they're rushed to a special hospital! Since 1995, Mote's sea turtle hospital has rehabilitated more than 600 poorly sea turtles. We pay them a visit to find out what kind of problems they're dealing with...

Turtle tumours

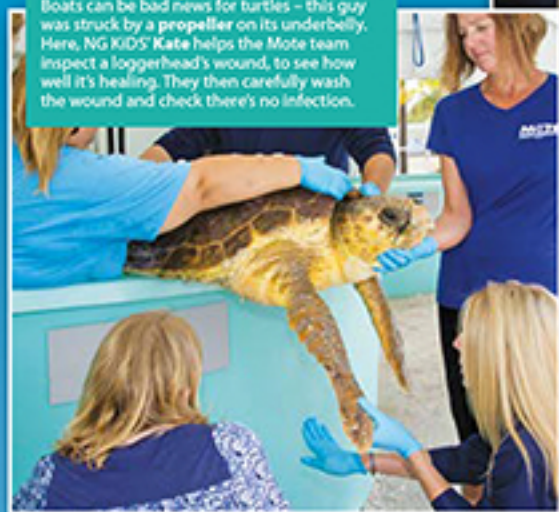
This poor turtle, called Grace, has a disease which causes tumours to grow on the surface of flippers, eyes and inside the mouth. It's highly contagious and so to stop it spreading further, turtles are kept in isolation until the tumours have been removed.

Hospital staff prepare Grace for tumor surgery to remove her growths.



Boat bumps

Boats can be bad news for turtles – this guy was struck by a propeller on its underbelly. Here, NG KIDS' Kate helps the Mote team inspect a loggerhead's wound, to see how well it's healing. They then carefully wash the wound and check there's no infection.



GREEN ALERT!

Around 90% of the sea turtles that come to the hospital are green sea turtles. Unlike other species, who are solitary, green turtles gather together and feed in groups. This may cause illnesses to spread more quickly between them, and also makes them more likely to be hit by boats. Oh no!



When they arrive, turtles are given names, and their progress can be followed on Mote's website. Check out mote.org/hospital/turtle



Once the team is confident that the turtles in their care are fit and healthy, they'll release them back into the wild. Yay!

Red tide

Most years in the Gulf of Mexico, plant-like creatures called algae accumulate to form blooms. Certain blooms, called red tides (see below) are toxic to sea turtles, but Mote staff are on hand to help them get better. Brilliant!



Some algae blooms can change the water colour and make it toxic for turtles.

Tangled up

Many patients are brought to the hospital by fishermen, who've accidentally entangled turtles in their fishing lines or nets. Staff remove wire and hooks, and treat the turtles with antibiotics until they've healed.



America As You Like It offer a seven-night holiday to Sarasota from £825pp including return flights from London Gatwick to Tampa, seven days' car hire and a seven-night stay at the Timberwoods Vacation Villas in a two-bedroom villa. Priced based on a family of four sharing. For more information visit americasyoulikeit.com