



Sea Turtle & Leatherback Fun Facts

Sea turtles are ancient ocean dwellers that have lived on the earth for 150 million years, since before the time of the dinosaurs. They are large, air breathing reptiles that inhabit both tropical and subtropical seas all over the world. Sea turtles spend most of their life at sea, but females come ashore to nest and lay their eggs beneath the sand.

There are 7 species of sea turtles: Green, Kemp's Ridley, Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Leatherback, Flatback and Loggerhead. The leatherback is the only sea turtle that we would likely spot in the wild near the Bay area.

- Sea turtles are deep divers and can remain active underwater for 45 minutes or more without breathing.
- They have special components in their brains that help them sense the Earth's magnetic field and help with their migration.
- Sea turtles have special glands that excrete salt from their blood to help eliminate salt water taken in with food.
- Temperature controls hatching of turtle eggs, but also determines each hatching's sex. Unlike humans, a sea turtle's sex is not determined by X and Y chromosomes. A few degrees difference will determine if the hatchling is a male or a female.

Leatherbacks - the Giant Mariner

- The leatherback is the largest turtle, and largest living reptile in the world! It can weigh up to 2000lbs.
- The leatherback is named for its shell (carapace) made of leathery tissue and connective tissue (not bone)
- Leatherbacks are the most migratory and wide-ranging of sea turtles.
- They hold the turtle record for deep diving (2,417 ft/ 737m) by a female migrating from Costa Rica to the Galapagos Islands.
- Their soft shells may help leatherback dive deep, absorbing the intense water pressure.

