

Human Impact Lab: Nesting 101

Loggerhead Marineline Center

Loggerhead Marineline Center is an ocean conservation organization and sea turtle hospital located adjacent to one of the most important sea turtle nesting beaches in the world. The Center features an on-site campus hospital, research laboratory, educational exhibits and aquariums, and also operates the Juno Beach Pier, which hosts world-class angling and sightseeing. The Center's conservation team works with 76 local and international organizations across six continents to form partnerships and share conservation initiatives and best practices that are core to its mission of ocean conservation. The Center is expanding and has launched its Waves of Progress capital expansion campaign, designed to accelerate and amplify LMC's conservation and education impact.

Our mission is to promote conservation of ocean ecosystems with a special focus on threatened and endangered sea turtles. Our vision is to be recognized locally and internationally as the leading authority in sea turtle education, research and rehabilitation.



Lesson Objectives

- I can describe the seven stages of the nesting process of a sea turtle
- I can identify the predators that sea turtles have at different life stages
- I can recognize ways in which humans can impact the environment

Vocabulary

- **Life Cycle:** the series of changes in the life of an organism including reproduction.
- **Life Stages:** the different phases of **life** that all individuals pass through in a normal lifetime. For sea turtles, those life stages are hatchling, post-hatchling, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult.
- **Predator:** an animal that natural preys on others

Resources

<https://marinelife.org/seaturtles/facts/>



Visit [Marinelife.org](https://marinelife.org) to learn more about Loggerhead

Hatchling Frenzy

About 45-60 days after a female sea turtle lays her eggs, sea turtle hatchlings emerge from their nest, they have a 'frenzy period'. During this period, sea turtle hatchlings have enough energy to trek the beach and swim out into the ocean to make it to the Sargassum for safety. As they are making their way from their nest to the Sargassum, they face many predators. Some of these predators include: ghost crabs, shore birds, racoons, coyotes, fire ants, fish, and sharks! Sea turtle hatchlings also face threats from humans during this 'frenzy period'. Threats from humans include beach-front lighting, beach furniture left behind, sand castles & holes, marine debris, and human activity on the beach at night time!

During this activity, students will learn the difficulties hatchlings face while finishing the activity with a lesson on the importance of protecting sea turtle nests. This activity is best done outside in a yard or open space.

Directions:

1. Pick one person to be a predator of their choice. All other participants are on one side opposite of the predator.
2. This activity is played like "Sharks and Minnows" Whoever the predator catches as the other participants run toward the predator's side becomes a predator themselves.
3. Continue the activity until there is a final surviving hatchling. Finish the game with some reflection on natural threats hatchlings have to face.

Activity extension:

You can extend this activity in two different ways:

- Place lawn chairs, cones, or other objects to represent human threats to hatchlings. Participants must avoid these threats along with the predator to make it across.
 - With each predator tagged as another, assign which predator they are and a specific way they can move to catch the other participants. For example, the predator is a ghost crab and they can only move sideways.

Reflection:

After completing this activity, brain storm ways that you may be able to reduce human impacts on sea turtle hatchlings so that they have a better chance of making it out to the Sargassum! Write or draw some of the ideas that you brain stormed to help sea turtle hatchlings! Post the picture on social media and tag Loggerhead Marinelifecenter to share your ideas!

Facebook: @loggerheadmarinelifecenter
Instagram: @loggerheadmarinelifecenter
Twitter: LoggerheadMC

Sea Turtle Nesting Sequence

Cut out the pictures below and place them in order in which sea turtle nesting occurs.

