

Grade: K-2

Subject: Science



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

Lesson Duration: 55 minutes

## Teacher Information

This lesson will introduce students to the basic information about the 7 species of sea turtles. The main goal of this lesson is for students to learn about sea turtles and begin to identify the differences between the various species. Students will learn about the body parts of sea turtles, foods they eat, and habitats that they live in.

## National Education Standards

- **4ASI1.1** Ask a question about objects, organisms, and events in the environment. This aspect of the standard emphasizes students asking questions that they can answer with scientific knowledge, combined with their own observations. Students will use their own knowledge and observation skills to identify what they already know about sea turtles.
- **4CLS1.2** Each plant or animal has different structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction. Students will learn the body parts of the sea turtle and the function these body parts serve.
- **4CLS1.1** Organisms have basic needs. Students will learn the food and habitats that each sea turtle species prefers.
- **4CLS2.1** Plants and animals have life cycles that include being born, developing into adults, reproducing, and eventually dying. Students will learn that sea turtles begin as eggs on the beach, grow into adults, and return to the beach to lay eggs if they are females.

# Get to Know Sea Turtles

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify and describe the seven species of sea turtles, their characteristics, and habitats.

## Materials

- Pictures of the seven species of sea turtles
- Crayons/markers
- Chart paper, chalkboard, whiteboard, or smartboard,
- Sea Turtle Body Part Worksheet (provided)
- Sea Turtle Species Coloring Sheets (provided)



## Warm-up (5 minutes)

- Show a picture of a sea turtle and ask students to describe what they see.
- On chart paper, create a list with the students of what they already know about sea turtles. Where do they live? Have they seen one before? What do they eat?

# Get to Know Sea Turtles

## Sea Turtle Adaptations and Structures

Duration: 15 minutes

- Introduce the seven species of sea turtles and their names. Talk about their physical characteristics. Guide the students to identify their main body parts and discuss what each body part is used for: head, eye, beak, neck, shell, flipper, tail.
  - (2nd Grade: Explain that each individual segment of their shell is called a scute.)
- (Guided Practice) Distribute the Sea Turtle Body Part Worksheet paper to each student. Have students complete the worksheet and label the body parts. When the students have finished, have them turn to the person next to them and discuss how each body part can help a sea turtle eat, swim, and move.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

## Introducing the Seven Species

Duration: 30 minutes

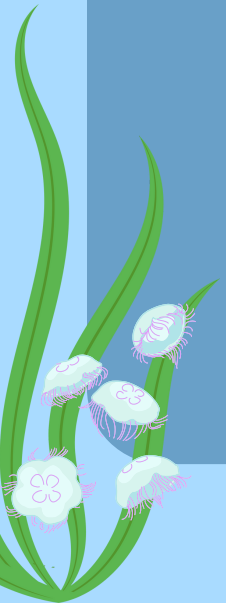
- Tell students that we are going to *compare* and *contrast* the different sea turtle species. This will help us learn how they are *different* and the *same*. To do this, create a chart on the board with eight columns. Label the columns with each species name and have one column for characteristics they all share (Green, Loggerhead, Leatherback, Hawksbill, Kemp's Ridley, Olive Ridley, and Flatback). Have a reference photo of each species available for the discussion. Ask students for ideas to add to the board/paper.
  - All sea turtles have a head, flippers, beak, and shell.
  - The color and shape of their shells are different.
  - Leatherbacks have a shell that is made of “leathery” skin while the other species have hard shells.
  - Some sea turtles are big, while others are small. Leatherbacks are the biggest and can be 4-8 ft, weighing 500-2,000 lbs. Kemp’s Ridleys are the smallest and can be 2ft long, weighing 75-100 lbs.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles



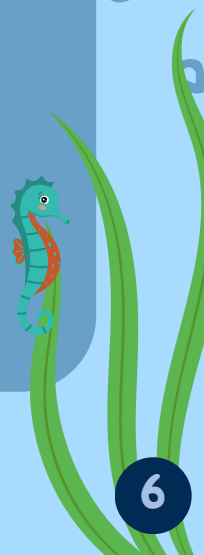
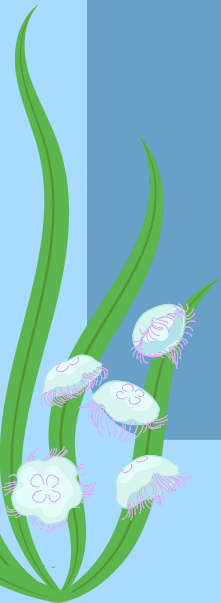
- Tell students that the different sea turtle species are also different because of what foods they prefer to eat. Some species eat the same things, while others prefer different foods. Add that the foods sea turtles eat change as they grow, just like humans. Baby sea turtles eat different foods than they will as adults.
  - Green sea turtles usually eat seagrass, algae, seaweeds, and other marine plant life.
  - Flatback sea turtles usually eat jellyfish, sea cucumbers, and soft corals.
  - Kemp’s ridley sea turtles usually eat crabs, fish, jellies, shrimp, and mollusks.
  - Olive ridley sea turtles usually eat crabs, shrimp, lobster, urchins, jellies, algae, and fish.
  - Loggerheads usually eat hard-shelled marine animals (known as “crustaceans”) such as crabs, conchs, and whelks.
  - Hawksbill sea turtles usually eat sea sponges, as well as algae, corals, mollusks, sea urchins, small fish, and jellyfish.
  - Leatherback sea turtles usually eat jellyfish, as well as squid, fish, crustaceans, algae, and floating seaweed.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

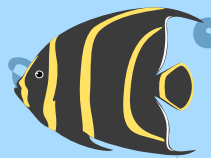
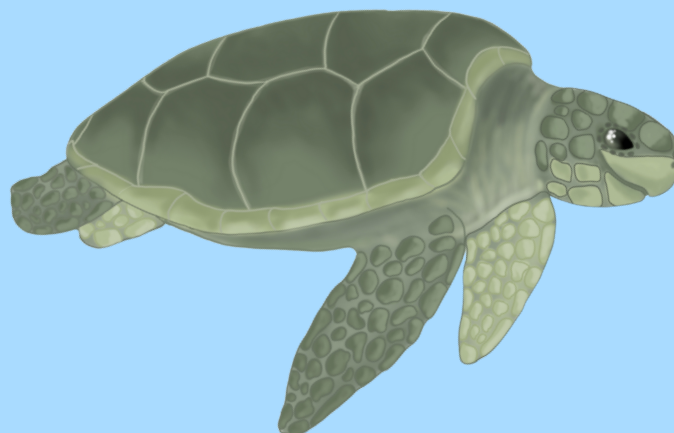


- Discuss that something else that makes sea turtles different is the “habitats” that they live in. Define habitat as the home where the sea turtles typically live. Add that sea turtles begin their life as eggs on the beach and if they are females, they will return to the beach to lay their own eggs. Sea turtles will swim thousands of miles during their life. When sea turtles are not nesting, these are the habitats where they are typically found:
  - Green sea turtles usually live near seagrass beds in warm tropical waters.
  - Flatback sea turtles live near Australia in shallow, tropical waters.
  - Kemp’s ridley sea turtles usually live in areas with muddy or sandy bottoms.
  - Olive ridley sea turtles usually live in warm tropical open ocean areas.
  - Loggerheads usually live in shallow, warm water near the coast.
  - Hawksbill sea turtles usually live in coral reefs.
  - Leatherback sea turtles usually live in the deep open ocean.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

- (Independent Practice) Distribute the Sea Turtle Coloring sheets to each student. You can allow students to pick the species they would like or assign each student a different species.
- Tell students that we are going to color our sea turtle like scientists. Ask students how a scientist would draw a sea turtle. Emphasize that scientists color things based on how they look in real life. Provide reference photos of the seven species so that the students can recall how each species looks.
  - 1st and 2nd Grade: Encourage students to add labels to their picture when they are done coloring. Labels help scientists tell other people what they know and found.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

## Conclusion (5 minutes)

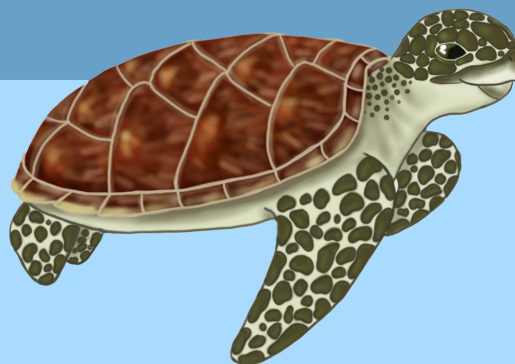
- Have students share their drawings and what labels they added.
- Recap the seven species of sea turtles and their characteristics.
- Ask students to name one way they can help protect sea turtles and their habitats.

## Assessment

- Observe students during the independent practice to ensure they are accurately labeling and coloring their sea turtle.
- Review student drawings and labels to assess their understanding of the physical characteristics of the seven species of sea turtles and the differences between species.

## Extensions

- Invite a local marine biologist or sea turtle conservationist to speak to the class in person or virtually.
- Organize a field trip to a local aquarium or sea turtle rescue center.
- Encourage students to write stories or draw pictures of their favorite sea turtle species.



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

## Resources

- Flatback:

- [www.seaturtleweek.com/flatback-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/flatback-day)
- [www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-flatback-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-flatback-sea-turtle/)
- [www.seeturtles.org/flatback-turtle](http://www.seeturtles.org/flatback-turtle)



- Green:

- [www.seaturtleweek.com/green-turtle-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/green-turtle-day)
- [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/green-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/green-turtle)
- [www.conserveturtles.org/information-sea-turtles-green-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-sea-turtles-green-sea-turtle/)
- [www.seeturtles.org/green-sea-turtle](http://www.seeturtles.org/green-sea-turtle)



- Hawksbill:

- [www.seaturtleweek.com/hawksbill-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/hawksbill-day)
- [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/hawksbill-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/hawksbill-turtle)
- [www.seeturtles.org/hawksbill-turtles](http://www.seeturtles.org/hawksbill-turtles)
- [www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-hawksbill-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-hawksbill-sea-turtle/)

- Kemp's Ridley:

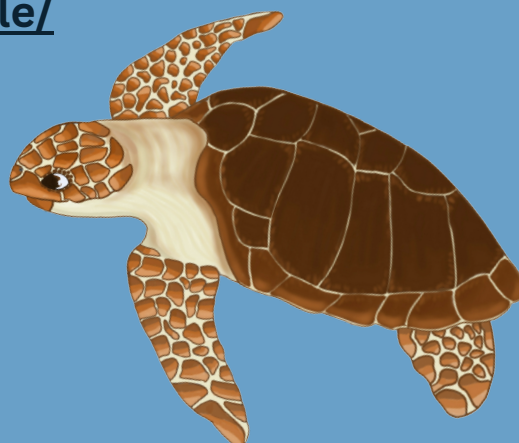
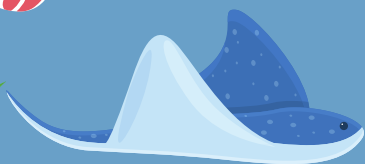
- [www.seaturtleweek.com/kemps-ridley-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/kemps-ridley-day)
- [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/kemps-ridley-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/kemps-ridley-turtle)
- [www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-kemps-ridley-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-kemps-ridley-sea-turtle/)
- [www.seeturtles.org/kemps-ridley-turtles](http://www.seeturtles.org/kemps-ridley-turtles)



# Get to Know Sea Turtles

## Resources

- Olive Ridley:
  - [www.seaturtleweek.com/olive-ridley-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/olive-ridley-day)
  - [www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-olive-ridley-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-olive-ridley-sea-turtle/)
  - [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/olive-ridley-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/olive-ridley-turtle)
  - [www.seeturtles.org/olive-ridley-turtles](http://www.seeturtles.org/olive-ridley-turtles)
- Leatherback:
  - [www.seaturtleweek.com/leatherback-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/leatherback-day)
  - [www.seeturtles.org/leatherback-turtle](http://www.seeturtles.org/leatherback-turtle)
  - [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/leatherback-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/leatherback-turtle)
  - [www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-leatherback-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-about-sea-turtles-leatherback-sea-turtle/)
- Loggerhead:
  - [www.seaturtleweek.com/loggerhead-day](http://www.seaturtleweek.com/loggerhead-day)
  - [www.seeturtles.org/loggerhead-turtles](http://www.seeturtles.org/loggerhead-turtles)
  - [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/loggerhead-turtle](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/loggerhead-turtle)
  - [www.conserveturtles.org/information-sea-turtles-loggerhead-sea-turtle/](http://www.conserveturtles.org/information-sea-turtles-loggerhead-sea-turtle/)



These materials are provided by Sea Turtle Week. Sea Turtle Week is a campaign of SEE Turtles. SEE Turtles helps save sea turtles through conservation tours, supporting important nesting beaches, working to end demand for turtleshell, helping clean up plastic waste from turtle habitats, educating people about how to help these animals, and promoting inclusivity in the turtle community. For lesson plans, fundraising ideas, online presentations, and field trips, please visit [www.seeturtles.org/schools](http://www.seeturtles.org/schools). For more information, please contact Brad Nahill, SEE Turtles Director, at [brad@seeturtles.org](mailto:brad@seeturtles.org) or 5800-215-0378.



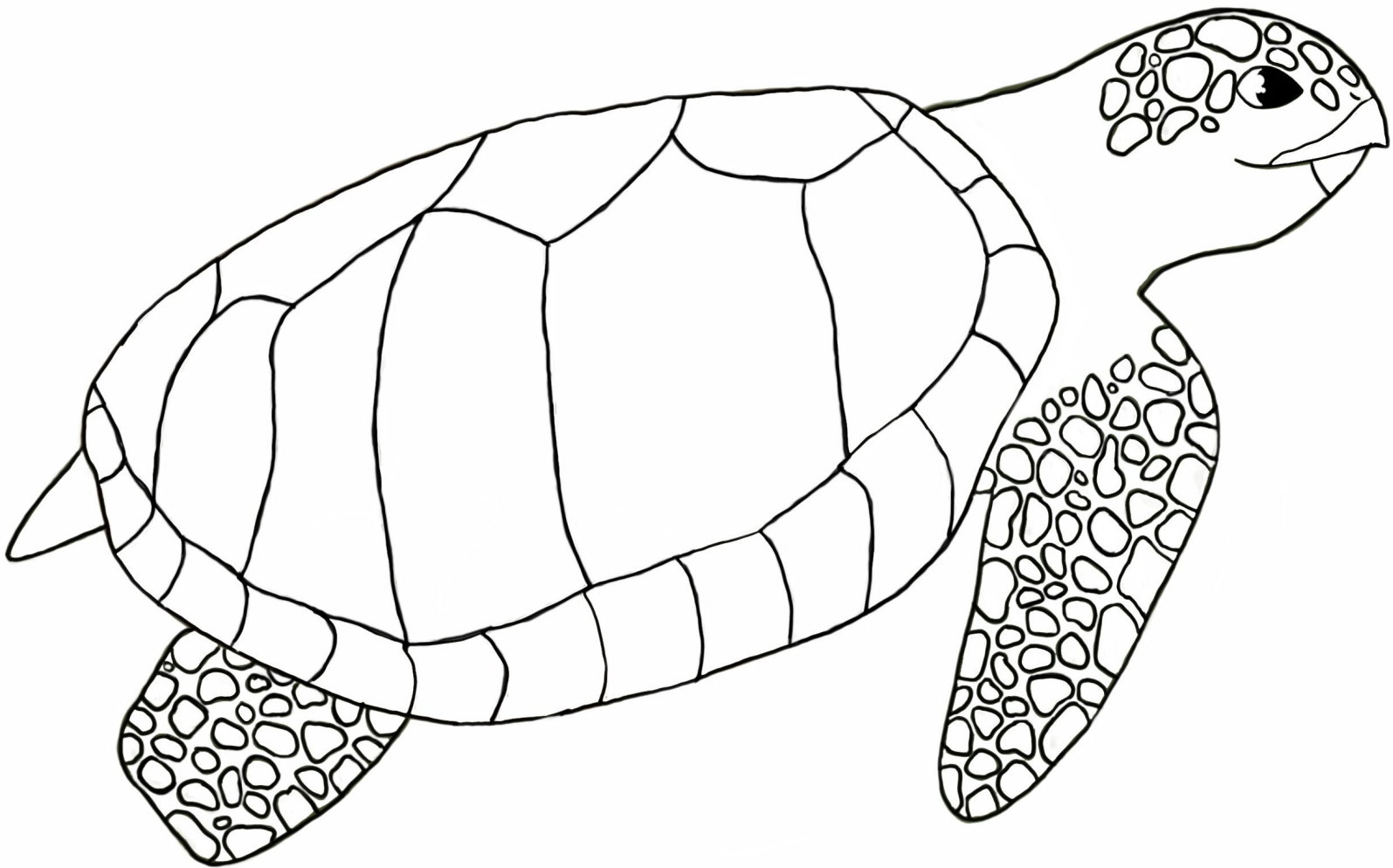
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# Sea Turtle Body Parts

Directions: Identify the main body parts of the sea turtle using the word bank below.

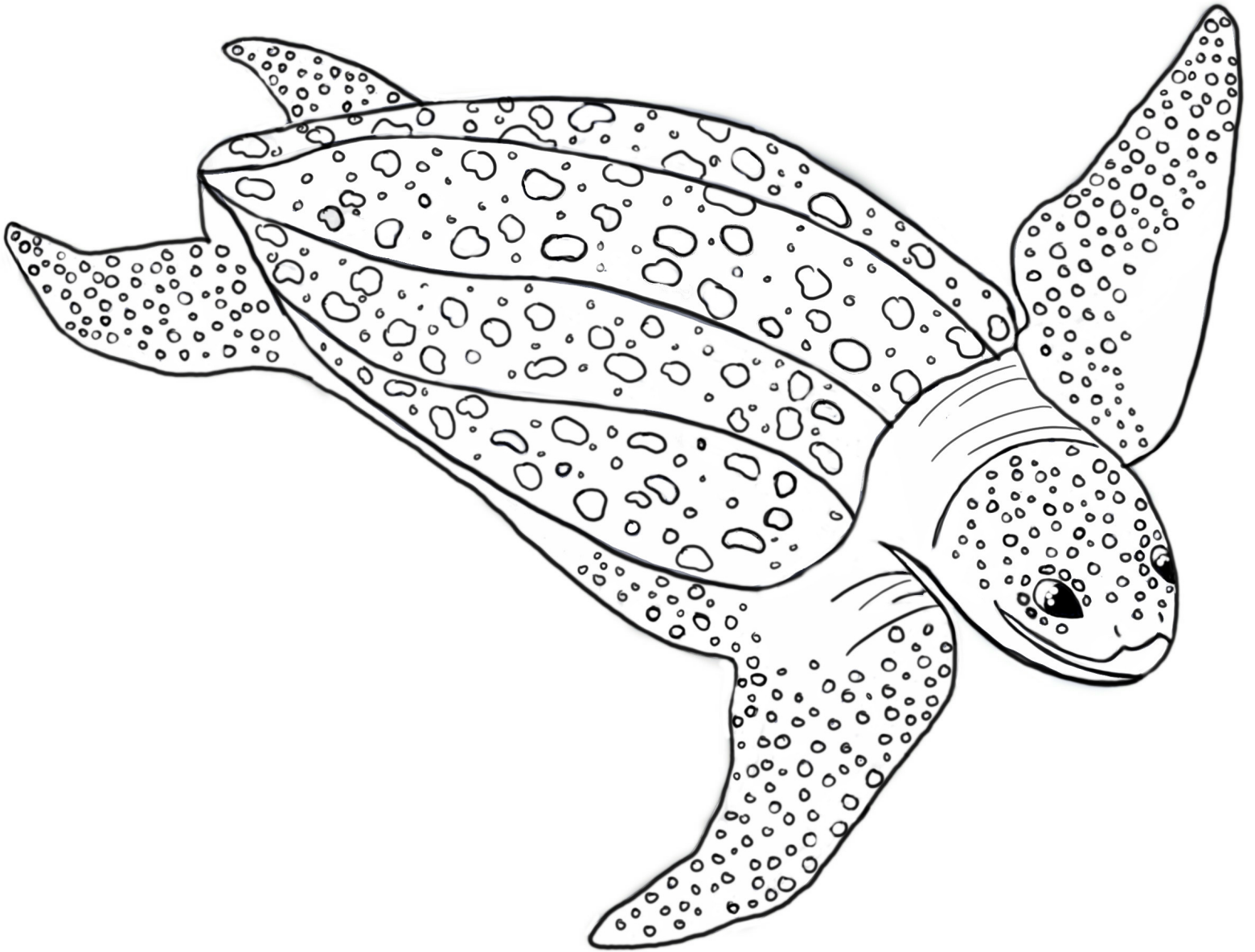
Head      Eye      Beak      Neck  
Shell      Flipper      Tail



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE

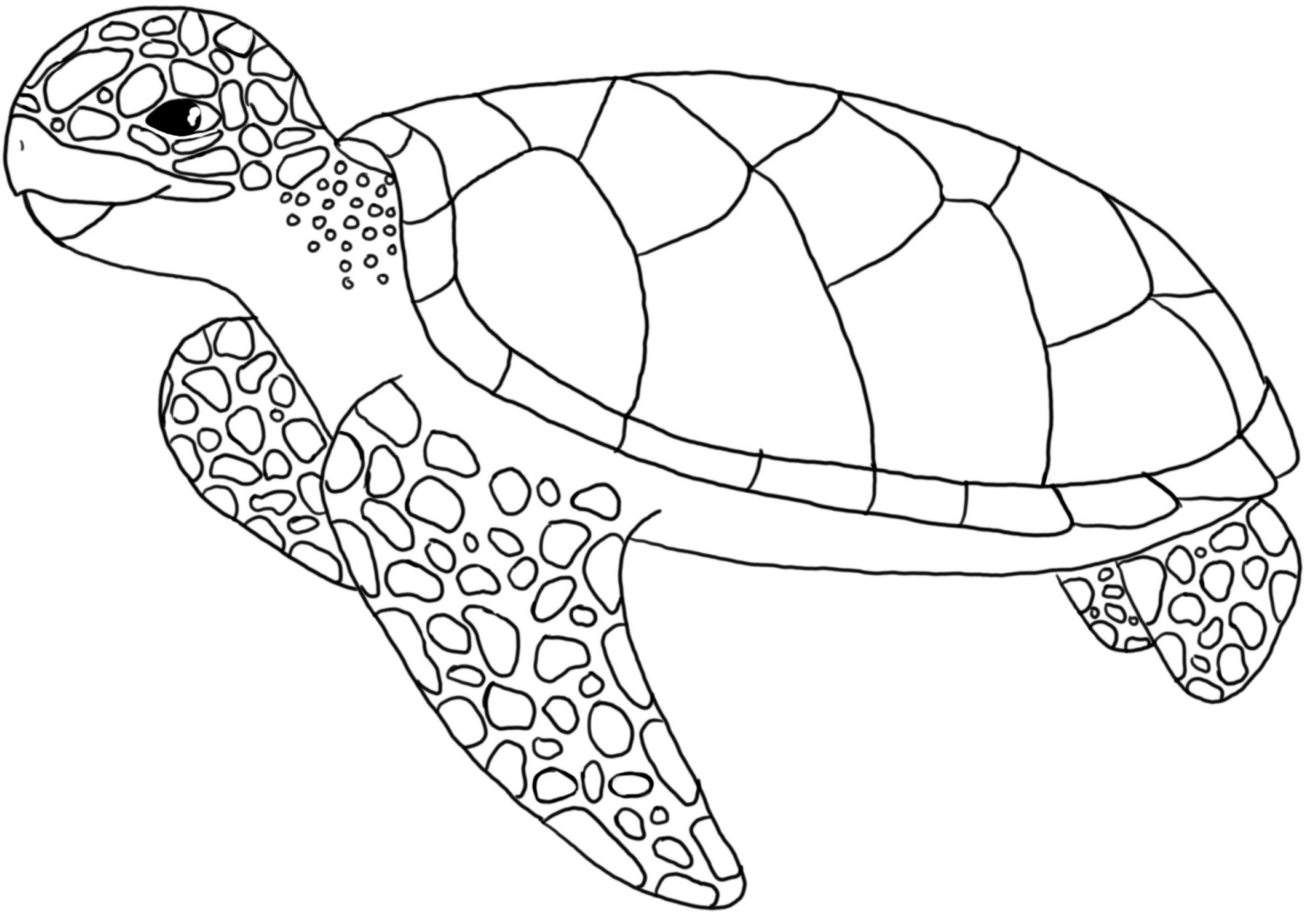


# SEA TURTLE WEEK

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# GREEN SEA TURTLE



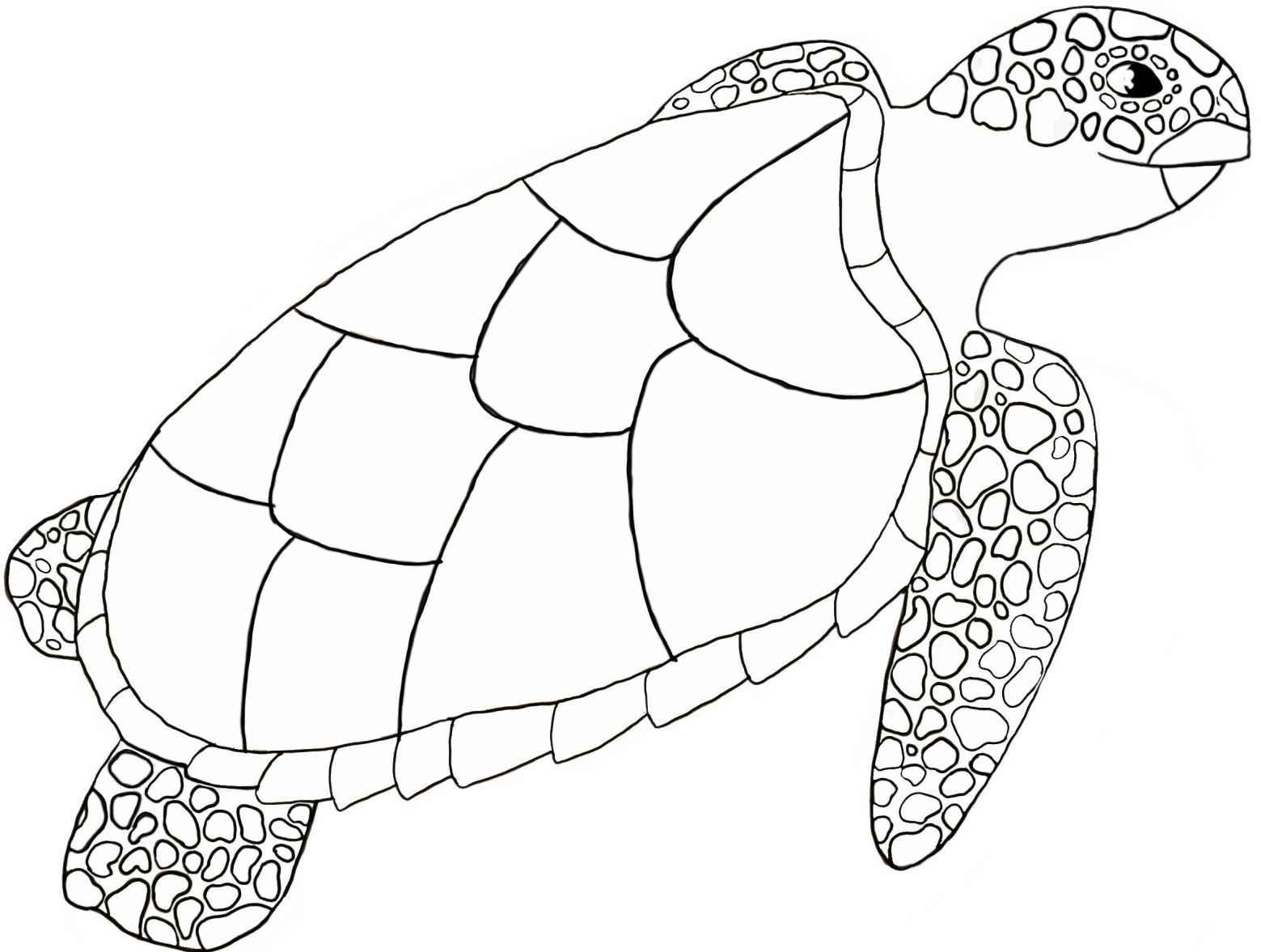
# SEA TURTLE WEEK



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# HAWKSBILL SEA TURTLE

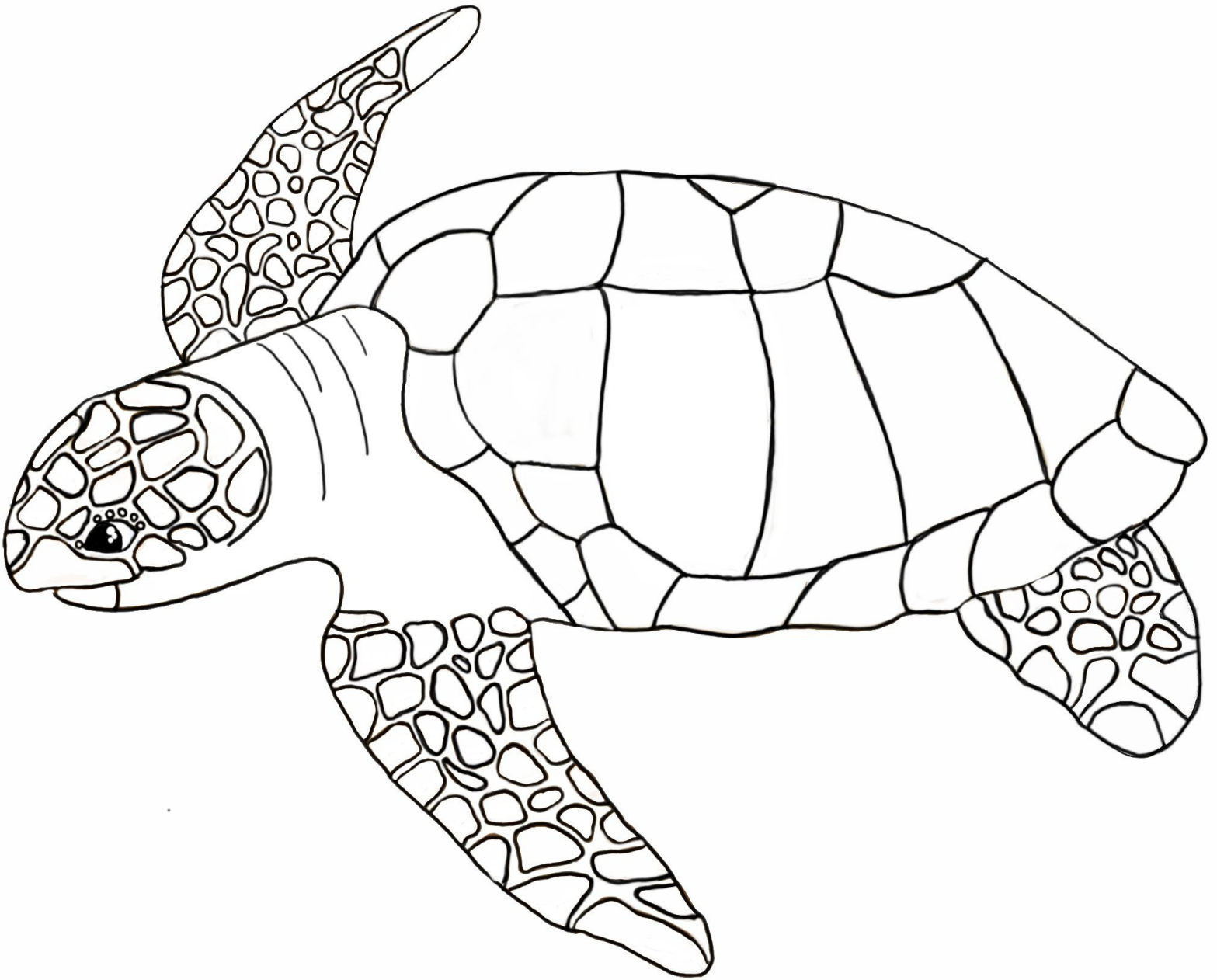


## SEA TURTLE WEEK

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# LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE

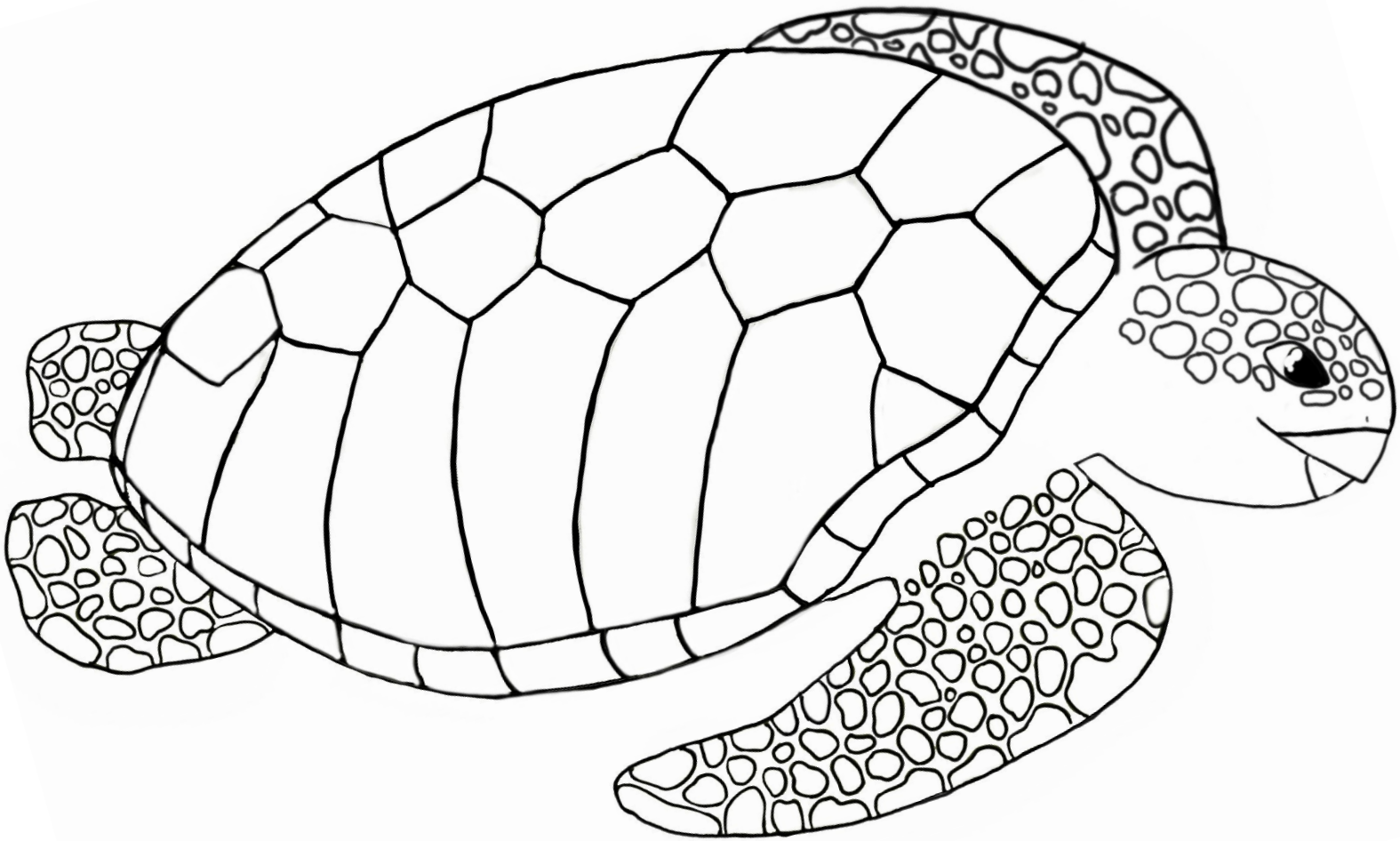


## SEA TURTLE WEEK

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# KEMP'S RIDLEY SEA TURTLE

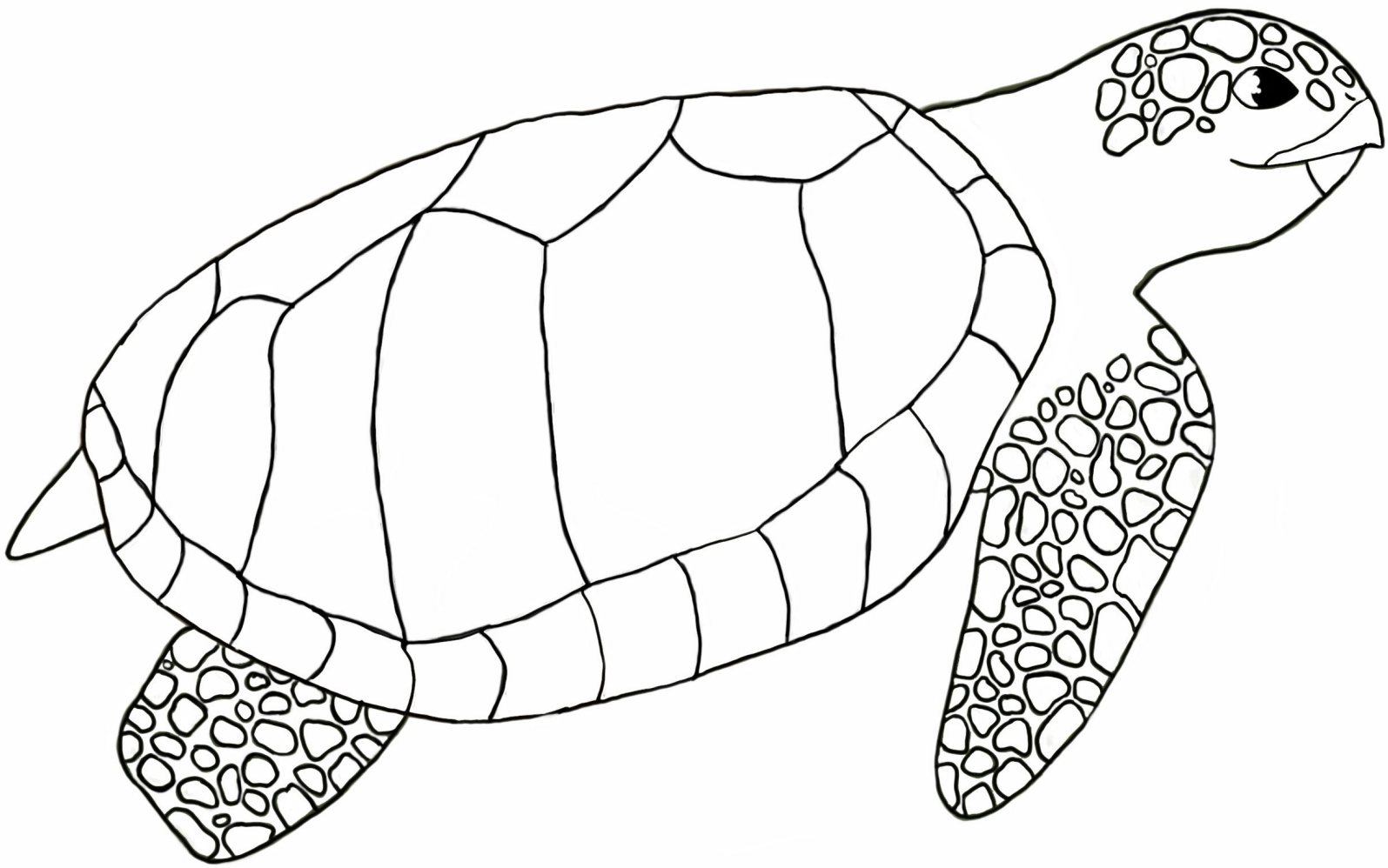


## SEA TURTLE WEEK

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# OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLE



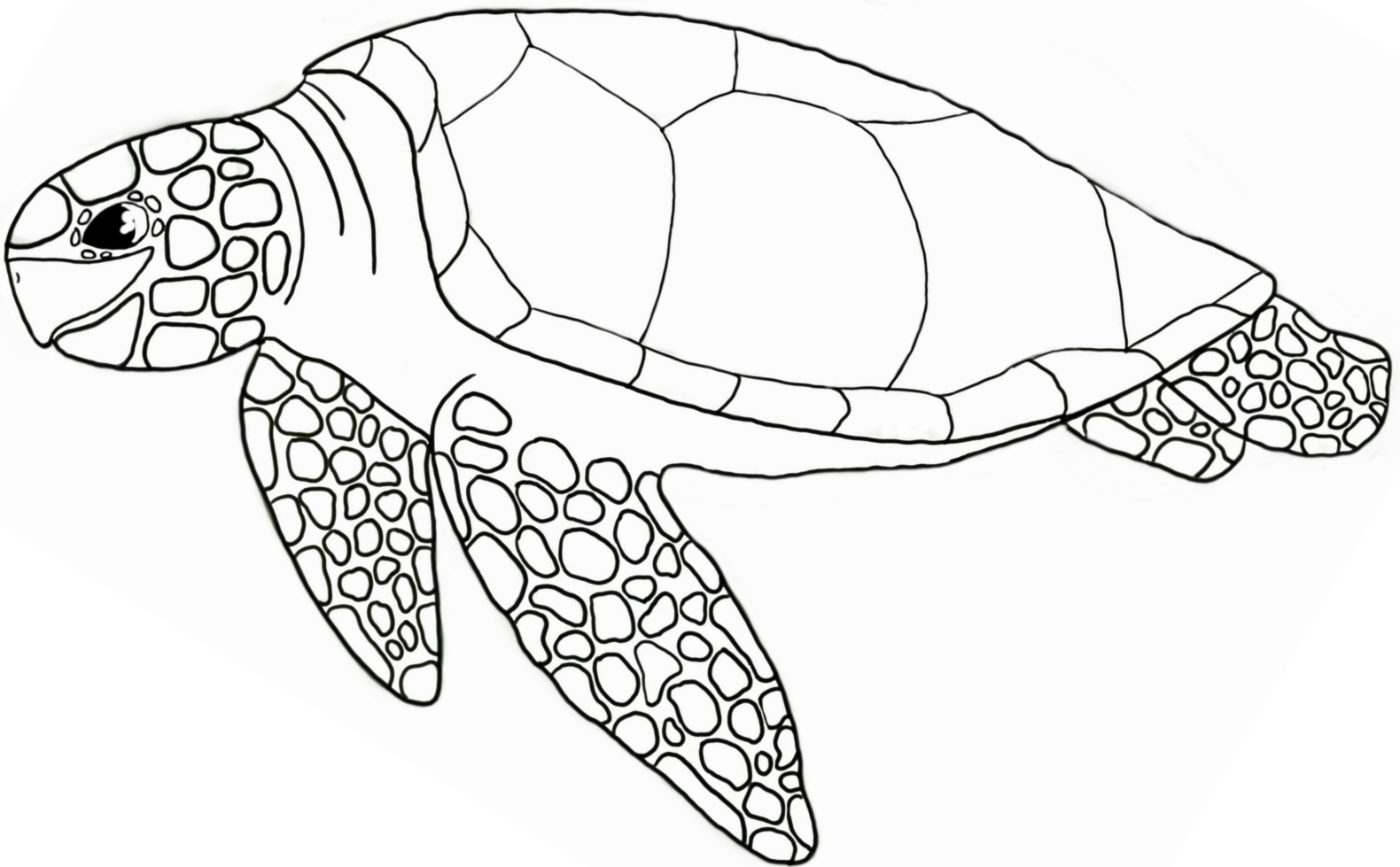
## SEA TURTLE WEEK



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FLATBACK SEA TURTLE



# SEA TURTLE WEEK