

Exhibit R-045

Sea Turtle Conservancy, “Species Fact Sheet:  
Leatherback Sea Turtle,” *available at*  
[http://www.conserveturtles.org/seaturtleinformation.php?](http://www.conserveturtles.org/seaturtleinformation.php?page=leatherback)  
[page=leatherback](http://www.conserveturtles.org/seaturtleinformation.php?page=leatherback)

July 9, 2014




## Information About Sea Turtles: Leatherback Sea Turtle

**Common Name:** Leatherback - named for its unique shell which is composed of a layer of thin, tough, rubbery skin, strengthened by thousands of tiny bone plates that makes it look "leathery."

**Scientific Name:** *Dermochelys coriacea*

**Description:** Head has a deeply notched upper jaw with 2 cusps. The leatherback is the only sea turtle that lacks a hard shell. Its carapace is large, elongated and flexible with 7 distinct ridges running the length of the animal. Composed of a layer of thin, tough, rubbery skin, strengthened by thousands of tiny bone plates, the carapace does not have scales, except in hatchlings. All flippers are without claws. The carapace is dark grey or black with white or pale spots, while the plastron is whitish to black and marked by 5 ridges. Hatchlings have white blotches on carapace.

**Size:** 4 to 6 feet (130 - 183 cm). The largest leatherback ever recorded was almost 10 feet (305 cm) from the tip of its beak to the tip of its tail and weighed in at 2,019 pounds (916 kg).

**Weight:** 660 to 1,100 pounds (300 - 500 kg).

**Diet:** Leatherbacks have delicate, scissor-like jaws. Their jaws would be damaged by anything other than a diet of soft-bodied animals, so they feed almost exclusively on jellyfish. It is remarkable that this large, active animal can survive on a diet of jellyfish, which are composed mostly of water and appear to be a poor source of nutrients.

**Habitat:** Primarily found in the open ocean, as far north as Alaska and as far south as the southern tip of Africa, though recent satellite tracking research indicates that leatherbacks feed in areas just offshore. Known to be active in water below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the only reptile known to remain active at such a low temperature.

**Nesting:** Nest at intervals of 2 to 3 years, though recent research has indicated they can nest every year. Nests between 4 to 7 times per season, with an average of 10 days between nestings. Lays an average of 80 fertilized eggs, the size of billiard balls, and 30 smaller, unfertilized eggs, in each nest. Eggs incubate for about 65 days. Unlike other species of sea turtles, leatherback females may change nesting beaches, though they tend to stay in the same region.

**Range:** Most widely distributed of all sea turtles. Found world wide with the largest north and south range of all the sea turtle species. With its streamlined body shape and the powerful front flippers, a leatherback can swim thousands of miles over open ocean and against fast currents.

**Status:** *U.S.* - Listed as Endangered (in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future) under the U.S. Federal Endangered Species Act. *International* - Listed as Vulnerable in 2013 (facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

**Threats to Survival:** Greatest threat to leatherback sea turtles is from incidental take in commercial fisheries and marine pollution (such as balloons and plastic bags floating in the water, which are mistaken for jellyfish).

**Population Estimate\*:** Between 34,000 and 36,000 nesting females.

**Nesting Sites:**



[Download Fact Sheet](#)



Nesting site locations and classification are based on several sources: *Sea Turtles - A Complete Guide to Their Biology, Behavior, and Conservation* by James Spotila, 2004; *The Worldwide Distribution of Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches*, Center for Marine Conservation, 1981; and from [SWOT](#).

\* Please understand that world wide population numbers for sea turtle species do not exist and that these are estimates of the number of nesting females based on nesting beach monitoring reports and publications from 2004.

Photo Credits: *Adult & Hatchling* by Daniel Evans - STC

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