

# Crittercam Educator Activities

## Sea Turtles



### GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS 1, 2, 8 SCIENCE STANDARDS A, B, C

*Students plot the migration routes of actual leatherback sea turtles, which satellites have tracked crossing the Atlantic Ocean.*

### Background on the Critters:

Sea turtles are among the world's greatest navigators. Some species travel huge distances, migrating across oceans between their feeding and nesting grounds. They use Earth's magnetic field to find their way.

Of the seven species of sea turtles, six are listed as endangered. Some die when they eat plastic or other indigestible trash, and when commercial fishermen accidentally catch them on fishing hooks or in nets and trawls. Pollution and human development along nesting beaches also contribute to the decline. Learning more about sea turtle migration and habits is key to protecting them.

One of these endangered sea turtle species is the leatherback—the largest sea turtle of all. Adults grow up to eight feet long and can weigh a ton. Leatherbacks migrate the farthest of all sea turtles, and dive the deepest. They have a soft, flexible shell that compresses, enabling them to reach depths of more than 4,000 feet. There, they find their favorite food: jellyfish.

## ACTIVITY

### Track Leatherback Turtles

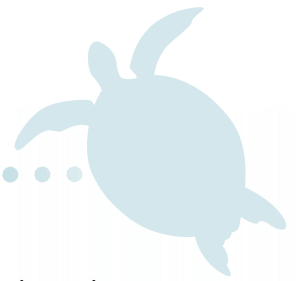
Research the turtles and programs that track them via satellite on these websites:

[www.cccturtle.org/satellitetracking.php](http://www.cccturtle.org/satellitetracking.php)

[www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/where\\_we\\_work/latin\\_america\\_and\\_caribbean/our\\_solutions/marine\\_turtle\\_programme/projects/leatherback\\_tracking\\_project/tracking\\_logs/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/latin_america_and_caribbean/our_solutions/marine_turtle_programme/projects/leatherback_tracking_project/tracking_logs/index.cfm)

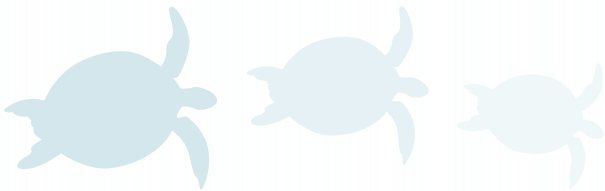
1. Assign each student an individual leatherback sea turtle from the websites above. Students print out maps of the routes their assigned sea turtles have swum.
2. Give each student a copy of the turtle activity sheet and have them fill in information about their turtles and their routes. To calculate the average miles traveled per day, divide the total number of miles traveled by the number of days the migration took. To calculate the average swimming speed, divide the average miles traveled per day by 24 (hours in a day).

## ACTIVITY



3. Each student plots his or her individual leatherback's route on a large world map. Each student uses three thumbtacks to mark the beginning, middle, and end point of the route, then joins the thumbtacks with string.
4. Discuss the overall results. Which individual turtle traveled the farthest? Why do so many start their migration at the same place (nesting beaches)? Why do the routes differ so much (currents, etc.)? What problems might the turtles encounter along the way?

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES



### 1 Language Arts: Books About Critters

*Sea Turtle Tim and Octopus Olga In the Adventure of:  
THE SEAWEED CHRISTMAS TREE*, by Marla B. Azinger—fiction  
Publisher: AuthorHouse  
Grades 4-7

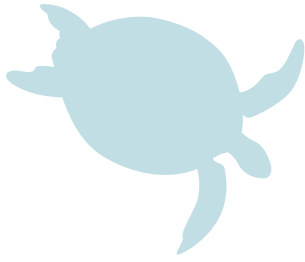
Christmas under the sea is a magical time. Octopus Olga and Sea Turtle Tim are getting ready for the holidays—and run into a few snags. Find out how their friendship brings it all together just in time for Christmas.

*Sea Turtles: Ocean Nomads*—nonfiction  
Publisher: Dutton Juvenile  
Grades 4-7

Find out about sea turtles living around the world, their physical characteristics, their brief and dangerous time on land, and their life at sea. There is discussion of their endangered status due to hunting, habitat encroachment, pollution, and fishing gear, as well as the conservation efforts to bring them back from the verge of extinction.

### 2 Science:

Like seals and sea lions, leatherbacks can stop blood flow to their flippers to preserve body heat in cold water. Take two latex gloves, and tie off the fingers of one. Fill both with warm water, insert lab thermometers into the tops, and tie off the gloves around the thermometers. Immerse the gloves in a tub of icy water. Record the temperature of the water in each glove every 6 minutes. Create a line graph to compare how quickly each glove lost heat. Discuss how the glove with tied-off fingers had less exposed surface area from which heat could escape.



# Sea Turtles

## Leatherback Sea Turtle Migration

Turtle's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and location tracking began: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and location of last entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of days tracked: \_\_\_\_\_

Total distance traveled: \_\_\_\_\_

Average miles traveled per day: \_\_\_\_\_

Average swimming speed (mph): \_\_\_\_\_

### Observations about turtle's migration route:

Where did it seem to be headed? \_\_\_\_\_

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How would you describe the shape of the route? \_\_\_\_\_

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How would you account for this shape? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are you curious about? \_\_\_\_\_

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