

Sea turtles of B.C. identification guide

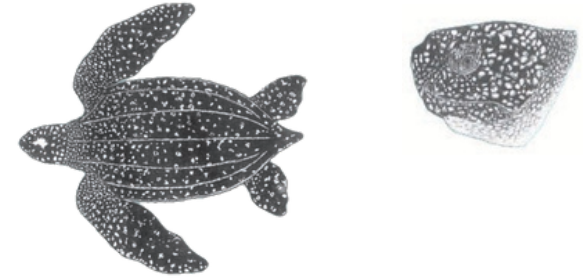
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Leatherback sea turtle

Dermochelys coriacea
(The most commonly seen sea turtle in B.C. waters)

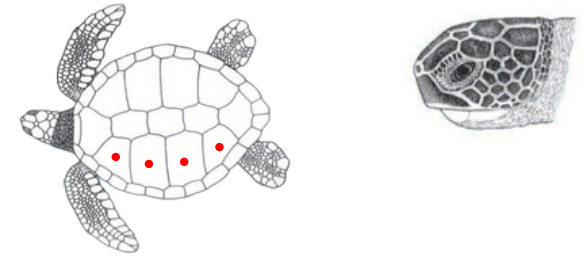
TOTAL LENGTH Up to 3 m / 9 ft
COLOUR Black, with white spots
FEATURES Very large; ridges along back (looks like the bottom of a boat); shell tapers to a point at rear end



Green sea turtle

Chelonia mydas

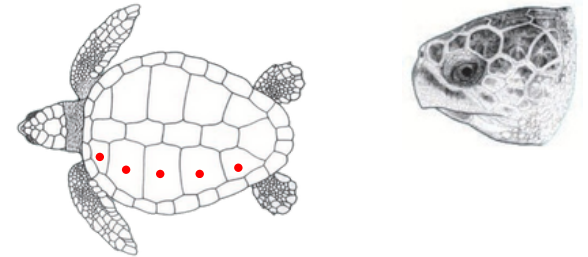
TOTAL LENGTH Up to 1.5 m / 5 ft
COLOUR Dark greyish green with light blotches on shell
FEATURES Shell tapered at rear; small head relative to body; four costal (side) plates (see ● on diagram)



Loggerhead turtle

Caretta caretta

TOTAL LENGTH 0.3-1 m / 1-3 ft (juvenile only)
COLOUR Reddish brown
FEATURES Large head and jaws; five costal (side) plates (see ● on diagram)

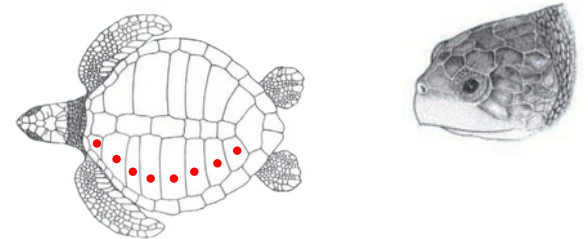


Olive ridley turtle

Lepidochelys olivacea

TOTAL LENGTH Up to 1 m / 3 ft
COLOUR Olive/grey
FEATURES Shell width equal to or greater than shell length (highly domed shell); six to nine costal (side) plates (see ● on diagram)

NOTE: Loggerhead and olive ridley turtles have not yet been recorded in B.C. waters but have been seen in Washington and Alaska.



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Illustrations used with permission: Eckert, K.L., et al. (1999) Research and management techniques for the conservation of sea turtles: IUCN /SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group Publication No.4.