

公众号：

National Geographic Readers: Sea Turtles

By: Laura Marsh

Sea turtles are tranquil and mysterious long-distance swimmers with an incredible sense of direction.

6-8

Age Range

15-30 mins

Length

620L

Lexile[®] Measure

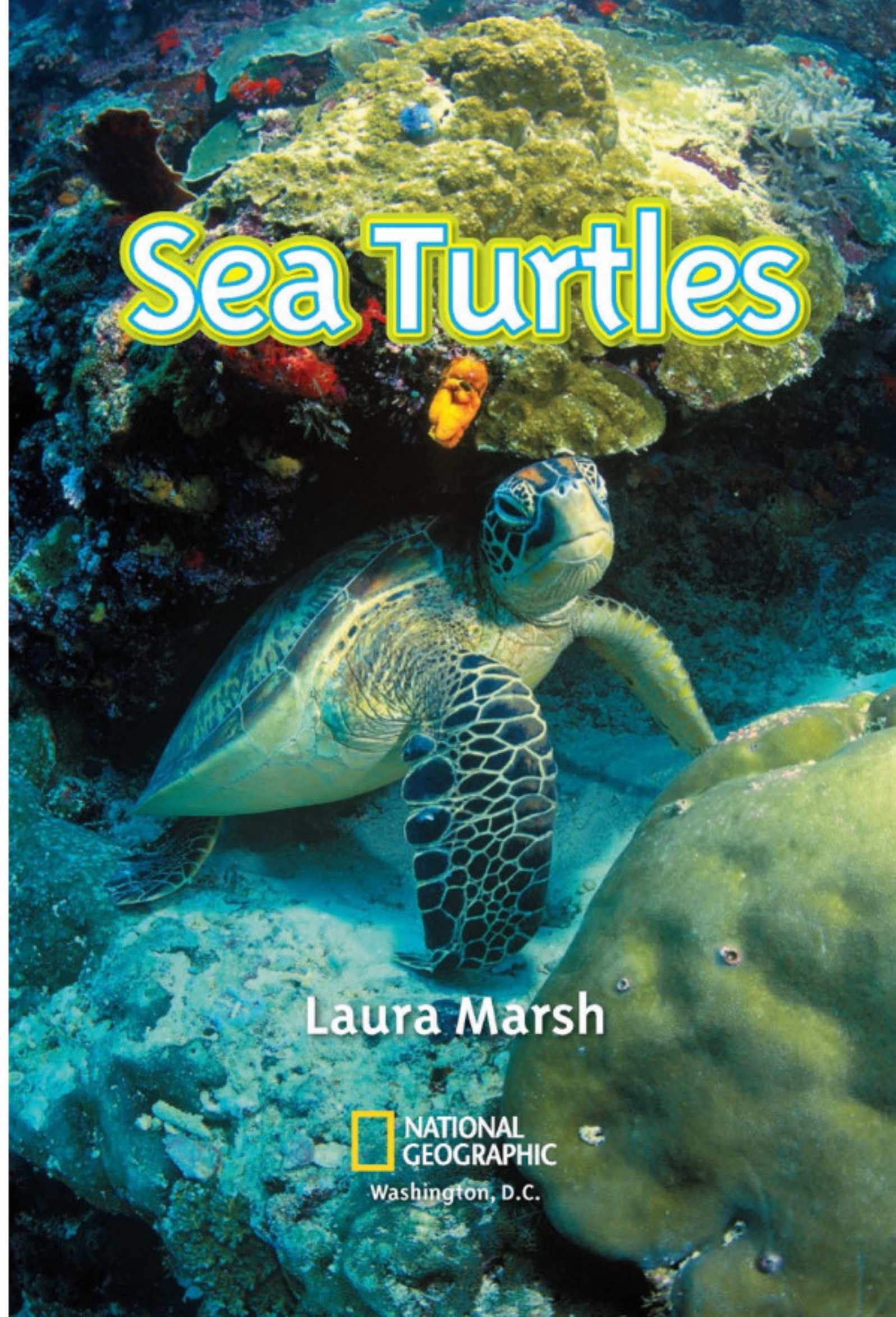
3.2

AR Level

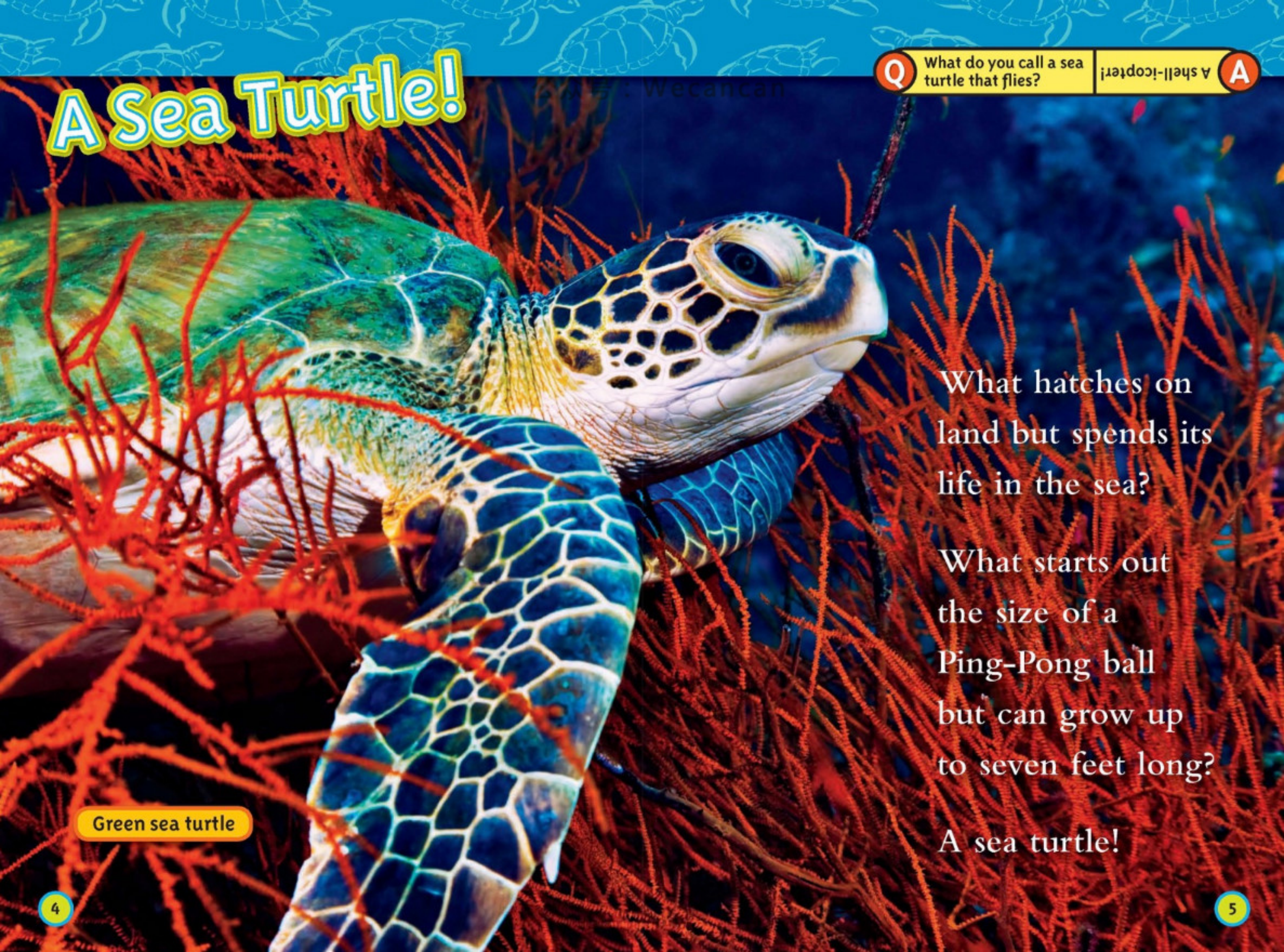
Sea Turtles

Laura Marsh

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
Washington, D.C.



A Sea Turtle!



Q

What do you call a sea turtle that flies?

A shell-copter!

A

What hatches on land but spends its life in the sea?

What starts out the size of a Ping-Pong ball but can grow up to seven feet long?

A sea turtle!

Green sea turtle

Ocean World

公众号：Wecancan

Leatherback sea turtle

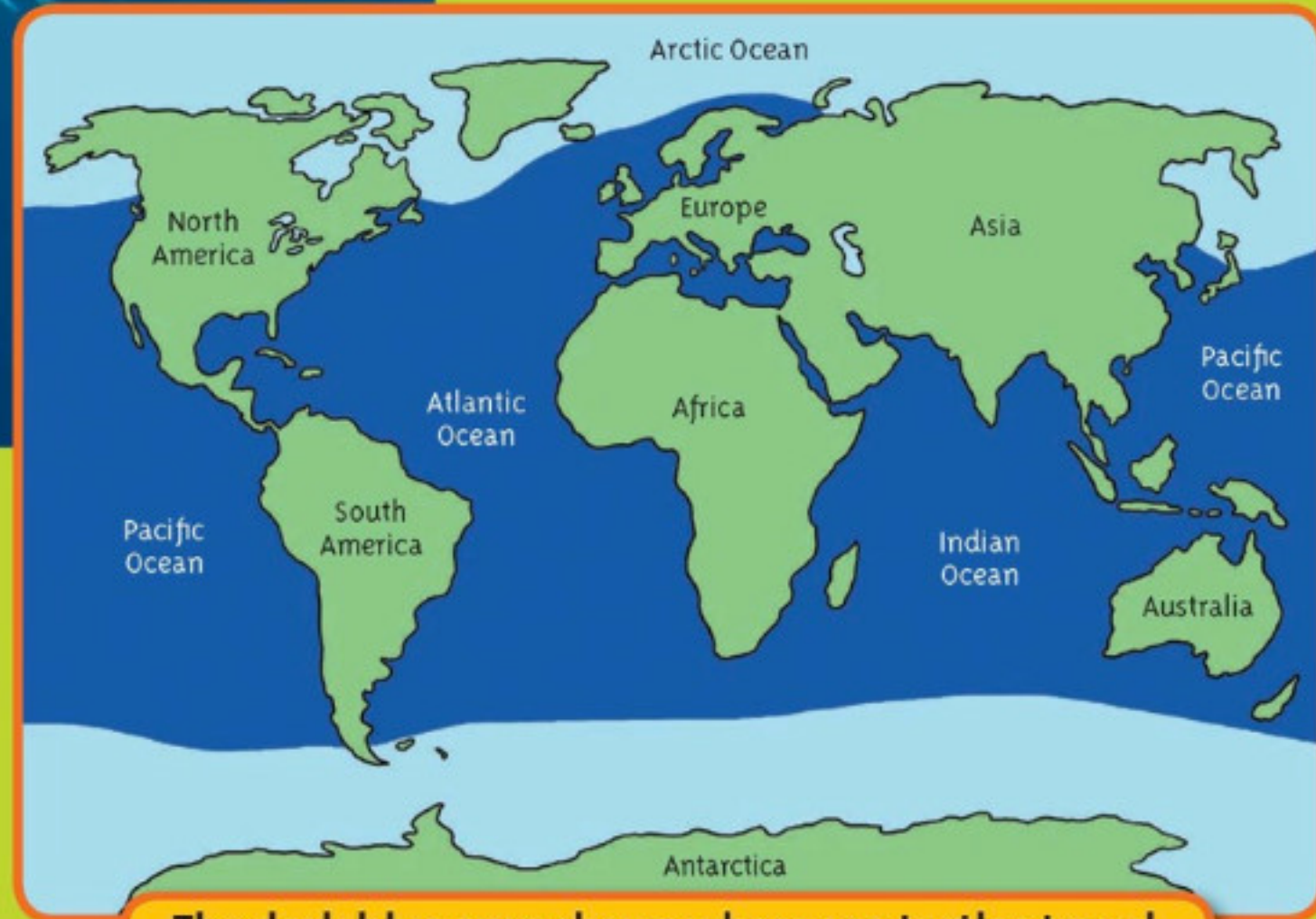


Sea turtles travel the world in warm ocean waters. They are one of the few reptiles that live in the sea.

Sea turtles are graceful swimmers in the water. Their flippers move like wings.

Turtle Term

REPTILE: A cold-blooded animal that lays eggs and has a backbone and scaly skin



The dark blue area shows where sea turtles travel.

A sleek body helps the turtle move easily through the water.

A sea turtle has lungs because it breathes air. A sea turtle holds its breath underwater.

The scales on its shell are called scutes.

Sea turtles can't pull their heads and limbs into their shells like land turtles can.

Their large, powerful flippers act like paddles.

The back flippers steer the turtle as it swims. They are also used to dig nests in the sand.

Scientists believe some sea turtles live 80 years or more, but they don't know for sure.

Green sea turtle

Meet the Turtles!

公众号：Wecancan



The loggerhead is the most common sea turtle in the southeastern United States. It gets its name from its large head.

There are seven kinds of sea turtles in the world. Each has special features.



The flatback has a flat body. It's the only sea turtle that doesn't live in U.S. waters. It lives near Australia.



The olive ridley has an olive-colored shell. It is shaped like a heart.

The hawksbill can't dive deep. It spends most of its time on the water's surface.



The Kemp's ridley likes shallow waters. It's the world's most endangered sea turtle.



The green turtle has a small head. Unlike other sea turtles, it goes ashore to warm itself in the sun.



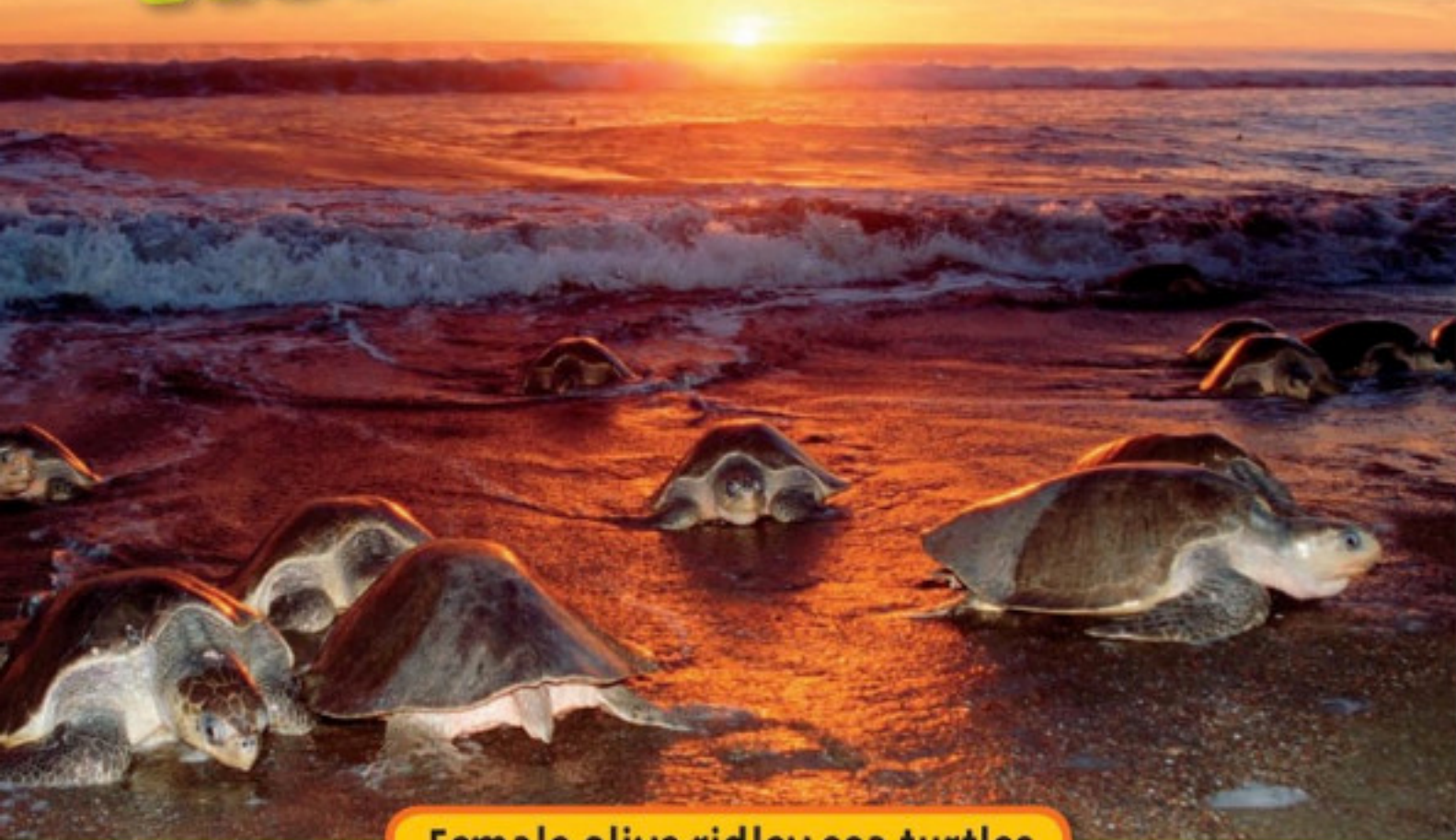
Turtle Term

ENDANGERED:
At risk of dying out



The leatherback doesn't have a hard shell. Its skin is rubbery with small bones underneath.

Nestbuilding



Female olive ridley sea turtles

A female sea turtle comes on land to lay her eggs. She usually returns to the same beach where she hatched.

Scientists aren't sure how sea turtles know where to go. They think sea turtles know by instinct.



What did the egg say to the other egg?

Let's get cracking!



The sea turtle digs a hole with her back flippers. She lays her eggs and covers them with sand. Then she returns to the sea.



INSTINCT: Behavior that animals are born knowing how to do

Female green sea turtle



Oh, Baby!

CRAAACK! The eggs hatch after 50 to 70 days. Tiny turtles called hatchlings crawl out of their eggshells.

They are less than three inches long.



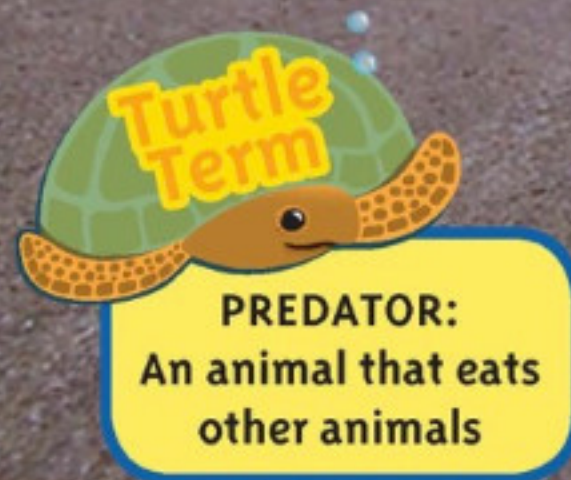
HATCHLING: A young animal that has just come out of its egg

Baby loggerhead sea turtle hatching from its shell

Hatchlings usually crawl toward the sea at night. In the dark, they are hidden from predators.

The little turtles follow the brightest light. The line where the sky meets the sea is the brightest natural light on a beach.

If the hatchlings follow this light, they will make it to the sea.



Leatherback hatchling

Big and Small

公众号: Wecancan

The smallest sea turtles are the Kemp's ridley and the olive ridley. Adults are about two feet long and weigh up to 100 pounds.



Kemp's ridley sea turtle



Leatherback sea turtle

The largest sea turtle is the Leatherback. It can grow up to seven feet long and weigh more than 2,000 pounds. That's about ten men put together!

On the Menu

公众号: Wecancan

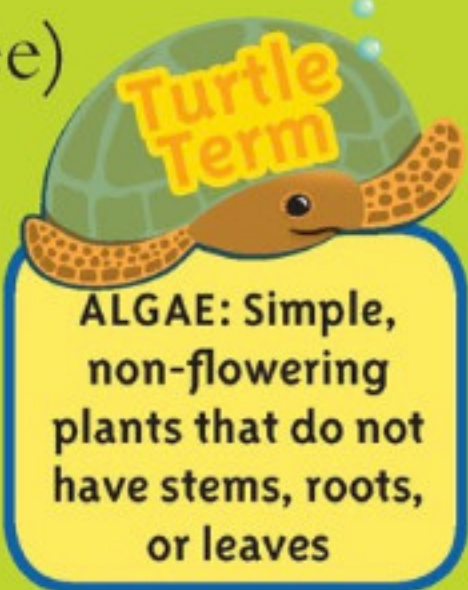


Green sea turtle

Munch, munch, what's for lunch?

Most sea turtles eat plants and animals.

They dine on algae (AL-gee) and sea grasses. They also munch on crab and conchs.



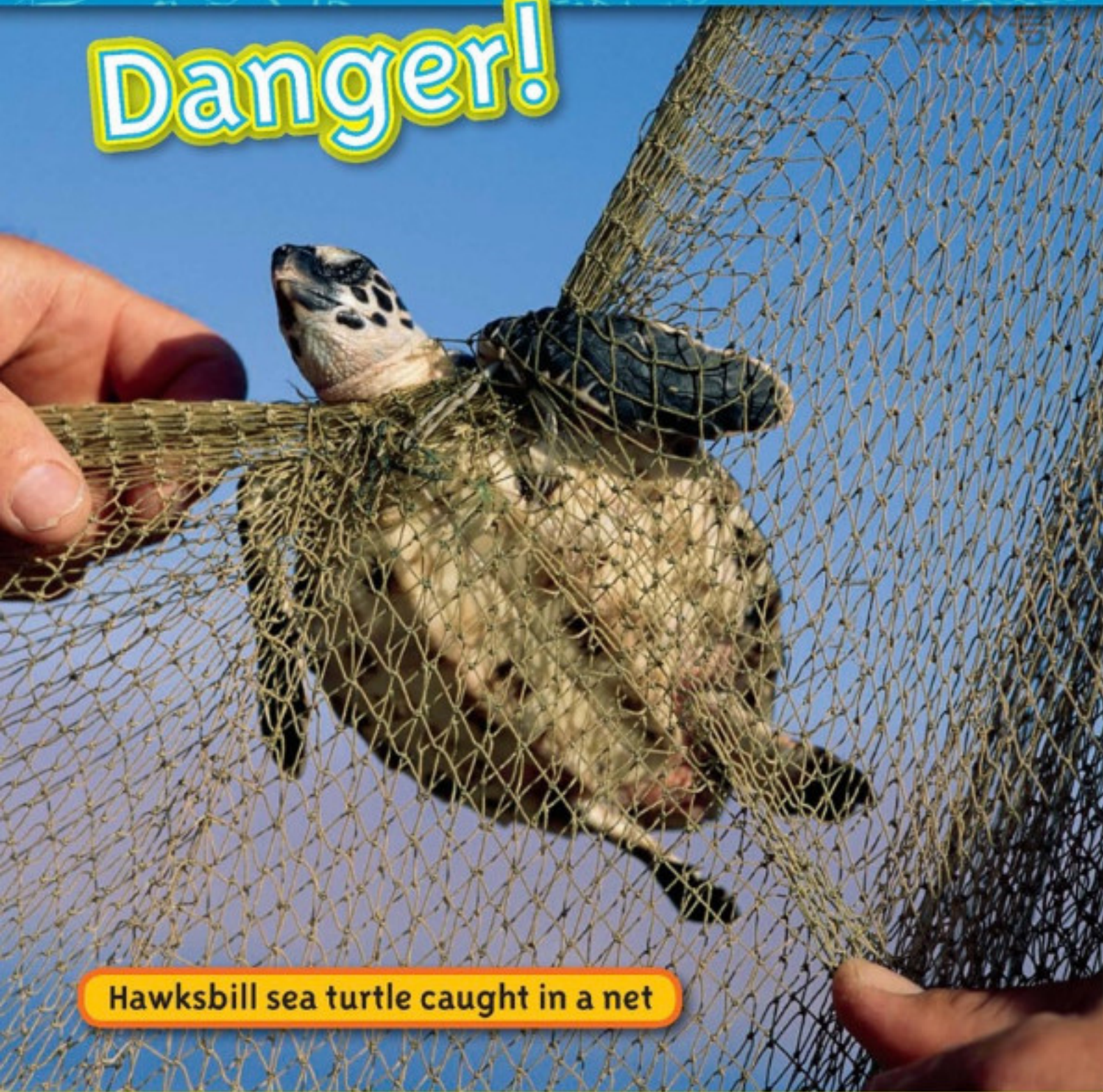
Jellyfish are a favorite food for many sea turtles.

But plastic trash can look like jellyfish in the ocean, and that spells trouble! Swallowing trash can hurt and even kill sea turtles.



Green sea turtle

Danger!



Hawksbill sea turtle caught in a net

Trash isn't the only danger to sea turtles. Fishing nets and hungry animals can harm them, too.

Q What kind of phone does a sea turtle have?

A A shell phone!

A

Building lights confuse hatchlings so they don't reach the sea.



Leatherback sea turtle confused by city lights

Sometimes people even step on sea turtle nests by accident.

Sea Turtle Rescue

In 2010 a giant oil spill leaked into the Gulf of Mexico. Oil covered sea animals and washed up on beaches. Oil is dangerous to people and wildlife.



Oil on beaches in Louisiana

公众号：

ecancan



Oil-covered Kemp's ridley



People in charge of a sea turtle rescue program in Louisiana saved many sea turtles.

The rescuers cleaned the turtles and gave them medicine. People cared for them until they could return to the sea.



Kemp's ridley sea turtle

Safekeeping

You don't need to work at a sea turtle hospital to help sea turtles. Here are a few things you can do to keep them safe.

1



Pick up trash on the beach.

2



Don't release balloons into the air. (They often end up in the sea.)

4



Read beach warning signs. Avoid turtle nesting areas.

3



Turn out lights that could be seen from the beach.

5



Tell your classmates what you've learned about sea turtles.

Glossary

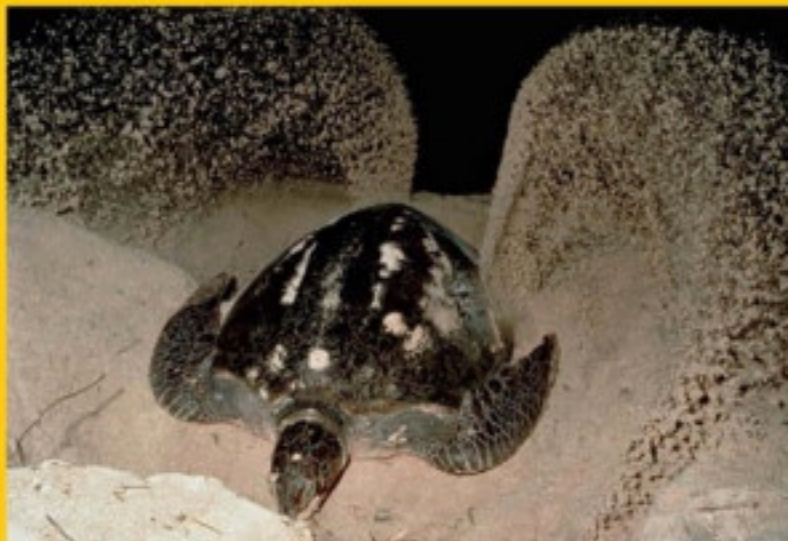
ALGAE: Simple, non-flowering plants that do not have stems, roots, or leaves



ENDANGERED: At risk of dying out



HATCHLING: A young animal that has just come out of its egg



INSTINCT: Behavior that animals are born knowing how to do



PREDATOR: An animal that eats other animals



REPTILE: A cold-blooded animal that lays eggs and has a backbone and scaly skin