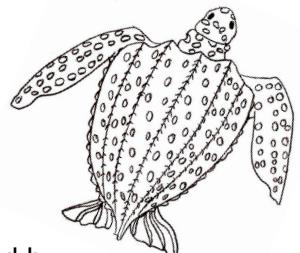


# Leatherback Sea Turtle



## Five Fast Facts:

1. The leatherback sea turtle is the largest living sea turtle and the only living member of the *Dermochelyidae* family.
2. Leatherbacks are named after their unique exterior. Instead of being covered by a hard shell made of *scutes* (bony plates) like all other sea turtles, leatherbacks are protected by a thick, oily skin.
3. Adult leatherbacks feed primarily on jellyfish (just another reason to keep plastic bags, balloons and other garbage out of the ocean!).
4. With their large, teardrop-shaped bodies, leatherbacks are the most *hydrodynamic* of all the sea turtle species (basically, they're sleek and powerful swimmers - an important advantage for those great oceanic migrations).
5. Like mammals, leatherbacks have a layer of brown fat. This fat provides increased insulation as well as an increased number of capillaries (blood vessels), which helps the turtle stay warm and energized in its cold water home.

## Food for Thought:

1. How are leatherback sea turtles adapted to live in the ocean?
2. What are the main differences between a leatherback and all other sea turtles?

## Activities:

- Interview with the Lone Leatherback - working individually or with a partner, students write an interview between a newscaster and leatherback sea turtle. Interview questions should focus on the leatherback's unique adaptations to living in the ocean, as well as perhaps its thoughts on being the only living species left in its family branch (for example, how does it feel toward the green sea turtle and its cousins?). As an extension, students could create a video or audio podcast of the interview.
- Venn Diagram - students compare/contrast what they know about the green sea turtle to what they've discovered about the leatherback sea turtle
- Experimental Hydrodynamics - If resources available, students may conduct experiments testing different shapes, sizes, and materials for hydrodynamic capabilities (using leatherback sea turtle vs. other marine animals as models)

# Ocean Daily News

**Directions:** You are the head anchor for Ocean Daily News, and your task is to write and perform\* an interview with a leatherback sea turtle. You need to write at least 10 questions and answers, which should focus on the leatherback's unique adaptations to living in the ocean, as well as other topics you can gather on leatherbacks from your research.

\*For your performance, you may create a video or audio podcast of the interview to present, or simply act it out with a partner "live."

**Example Format for Interview:**

**Interviewer:** Good evening, Mr. Leatherback, may I call you that?

**Larry the Leatherback:** In fact, I prefer to be referred to as Larry.

**Interviewer:** Larry then. Welcome to the Ocean Daily News.

**Larry the Leatherback:** Glad to be here.

**Interviewer:**

**Larry the Leatherback:**

**Interviewer:**

**Larry the Leatherback:**