TURTLES IN SCHOOLS

TERM 1 WORKBOOK

Photo credit: Ricky Spencer

1 Million Turtles

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

TURTLES IN SCHOOLS

Produced by the
1 Million Turtles Community
Conservation Program
and funded by
The Foundation for National
Parks and Wildlife.

In the pages that follow, you will find a comprehensive set of lesson plans. Our initiative is not just about imparting knowledge but fostering a deep connection between students and their natural environment and instilling a sense of responsibility and awareness of freshwater turtles and their conservation.

As we embark on this educational venture, we extend our gratitude to educators, students, and all those who champion the cause of conservation. The Turtles in Schools Program is not just a curriculum; it is a movement to inspire the next generation of environmental custodians.

Thank you,

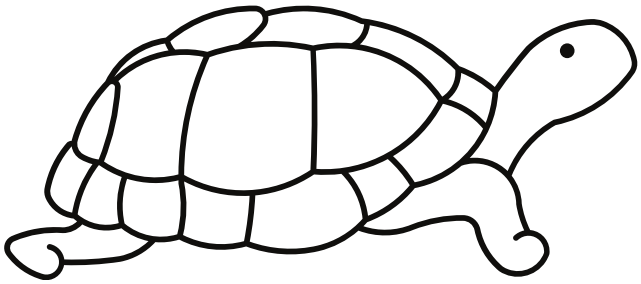
1 Million Turtles Community Conservation Program

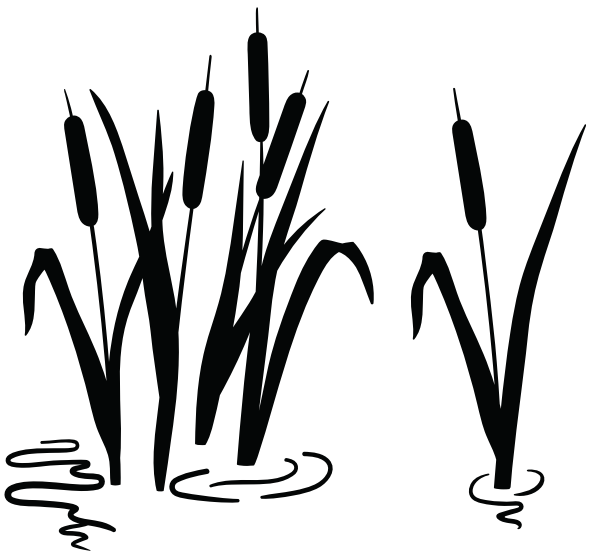
Test your Understanding

Read the following passage and answer the questions on the following page:

In recent decades, Australia has witnessed a concerning decline in freshwater turtle populations, raising alarms among conservationists and researchers. Freshwater turtles spend most of their lives in freshwater habitats such as rivers, streams, lakes and swamps. Australia is home to 25 species of freshwater turtle, with all but one belonging to the family Chelidae. Freshwater turtles fill multiple ecological roles in the food web including top predators, herbivores and scavengers, and are often referred to as the “vacuum cleaners” of the river.

Despite their ecological importance freshwater turtles are facing significant threats to their survival. Invasive species such as European red foxes and feral pigs prey upon turtle nests and nesting females which reduces recruitment into the population and can hamper population growth. Urban development, agriculture, and infrastructure projects, contribute to the alteration and destruction of wetland habitats and reduce the availability of suitable habitat for freshwater turtles. The introduction of new diseases into freshwater turtle populations can have devastating effects on population size and survival. Additionally, rising temperatures may affect nesting success, as turtles rely on specific temperature ranges for egg incubation, while flooding may cause turtle nests to become inundated.





Test your Understanding

Questions:

Q1: Why are conservationists and researchers concerned about freshwater turtles?

Q2: What ecological role do freshwater turtle fill in the food web?

Q3: Name two threats to freshwater turtle populations.

Q4: For one of the threats named in question 3, specify the impact it has on freshwater turtle populations.

Test your Knowledge

Questions:

Q1: Which of the following are examples of wetland environments?
(a) River, billabong, desert, rainforest
(b) Swamp, mangroves, rainforest, river
(c) River, stream, billabong, swamp
(d) Swamp, mangroves, ocean, rainforest

Q2: Which of the following are threats to wetland environments?
(a) Urbanisation
(b) Pollution
(c) Water extraction
(d) All of the above

Q3: Baby freshwater turtles are called:
(a) Tadpoles
(b) Flotilla
(c) Lounge
(d) Hatchlings

Q4: What is the top of a turtles shell called?
(a) Carapace
(b) Scute
(c) Bony plate
(d) Plastron

Q5: Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of freshwater turtles.
(a) They brumate over winter.
(b) They lay eggs.
(c) They are ectothermic (cold-blooded).
(d) They live in saltwater environments.

Test your Knowledge

Questions:

Q6: Explain why wetlands are important ecosystems.

Q7: Explain how human activities can impact wetland environments.

Q8: List two adaptations that help freshwater turtles survive in wetland environments.

Q9: Draw the lifecycle of a freshwater turtle.

Turtley-Awesome Turtle Tales

Write a captivating tale about your experience with a turtle. Your tale may be real or fictional.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY

What I Know (K), What I Want to Know (W), What I Learnt (L)

Materials:

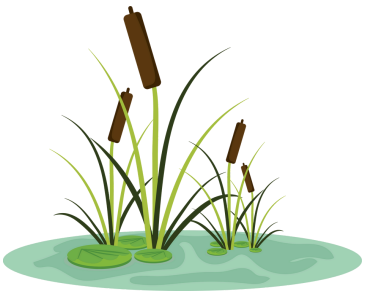
- Large chart paper divided into 3 sections labeled "K" (Know), "W" (Want to Know), and "L" (Learnt).
- Markers or pens

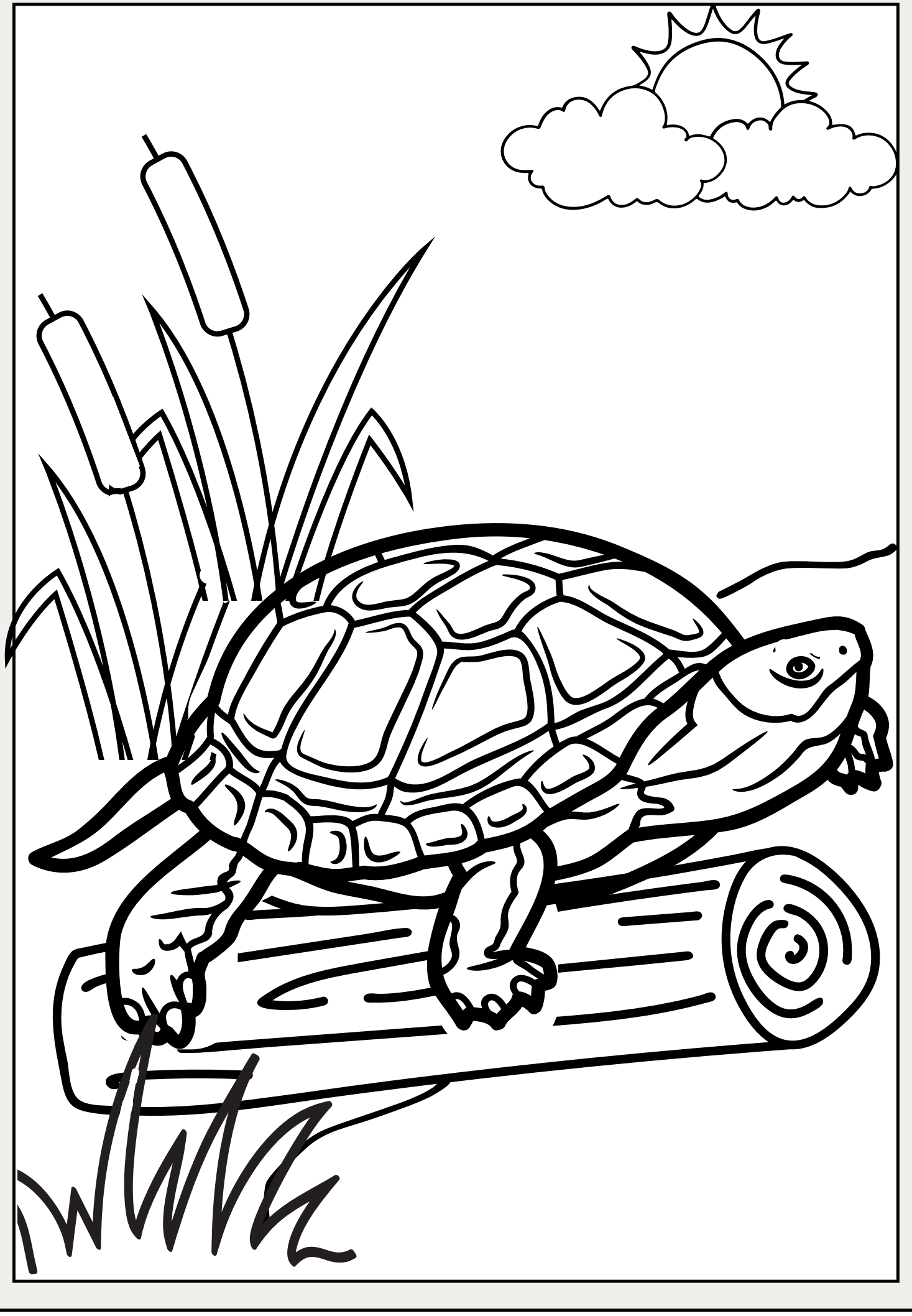
Instructions:

(1A) Brainstorm what you Know (K) about wetlands and freshwater turtles. Write them in the “What I Know” column.

(1B) Write questions of “What I Want to Know” in the Want to Know (W) column.

What I Know (K)	Want to Know (W)	What I Learnt (L)





Word Search

G N X R E V X G M W D L G N Y S K G Y D M I D I Y
J F H A U O N T C G K I R A I N P Q W H N T Z Q C
Q E P B R D F E R E Y F Y P P W E T L A N D R Z Z
H M R I O W X P S A Q O K Y X E V L H T I V I W O
E Q N O P U F O D T N F O T I J Q B E C G D P U L
R P P T E C R K F B C S M A B S Z I P H E I A F S
B L T I A N E B F Q O H E E Q A D K N L E S R Z C
I A U C N Y S S A C K W A C R Z S L A I V T I F A
V S R Y F K H M U N N O B M T V O K Y N V R A D V
O T T J O C W F N Q I E C E B A T L I G F I N N E
R R L O X L A T A H W S S Q U E N V Q N B B D W N
E O E B E I T A P Q Y C A T P I R S Y T G U Y E G
T N Y I S M E U B A U L B T P J N C Z R H T J B E
O C R O R A R M Q U E A X Z I R I I U I S I U B R
S D H T P T C E I W N C T N B O E X L P J O I E D
U E P I Q E A L U T W D T I L T N D B E X N H D G
G L C C I C R Q H Q I C A O C C O S A A A M C F N
Y F A B I H N J E W C G O N T A R U K T X P Y E J
W L R U E A I J I K I Y A E C H D Y M I I X X E L
N O A Y I N V P R D O T U T B E E P K W K O L T T
A R P Q F G O S P I S I F Z I I W R X C K G N P E
K A A N W E R R Y C B B S U G O J A M Z H N T O B
M T C W G A E E T P U L X W I P N W A I Q G E A H
I Z E O L J I Q P O L L U T I O N K O L C Q J K T
V H D L H B T H R E A T T M S R K U E N F I L B E

European foxes
Ectothermic
Climate change
Freshwater
Nest predation
Distribution
Urbanisation
Flora
Nest chamber
Mitigation
Webbed feet
Pollution
Hatchling
Abundance
Riparian
Scavenger
Carapace
Transect
Fauna
Carnivore
Wetland
Plastron
Herbivore
Aquatic
Basking
Biotic
Threat
Abiotic
Turtle

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY

What I Know (K), What I Want to Know (W), What I Learnt (L)

Materials:

- Large chart paper divided into 3 sections labeled "K" (Know), "W" (Want to Know), and "L" (Learnt).
- Markers or pens

Instructions:

(1A) Revisit your Know, Want to Know and Learnt chart and complete the Learnt (L) column.

What I Know (K)	Want to Know (W)	What I Learnt (L)
		

Photo credit (turtle): Dr Donald McKnight