

TURTLES IN SCHOOLS

TERM 4 WORKBOOK

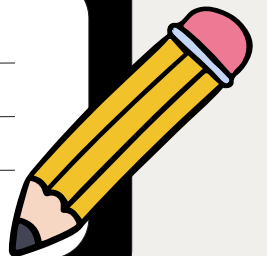


Photo credit: TurtleSAT User



1 Million Turtles

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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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**

TURTLES

LESSON

TERM FOUR

FRESHWATER TURTLE NESTING

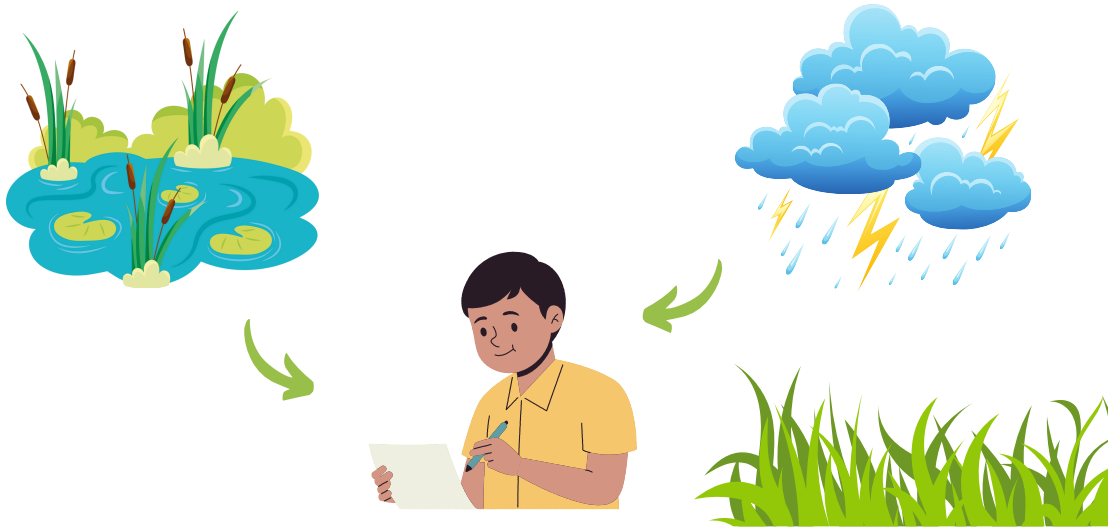
- Learning Intentions
- Background
- Activities
- Curriculum Mapping

Photo credit: Dr Donald McKnight



Learning Intentions

- (1) Identify suitable turtle nesting habitat within the wetland environment and describe nest site characteristics;
- (2) Describe turtle nesting behaviour (time of year, egg chamber).



Identify



Describe

Background Information

Freshwater turtle nesting

Nesting season:

The nesting season for freshwater turtles in Australia varies among species and regions. Generally, it occurs during the warmer months, typically from September to March.

Environmental triggers for nesting:

Females turtles typically emerge from the water during or after spring/summer rainfall as the soil is softer making nest construction easier.



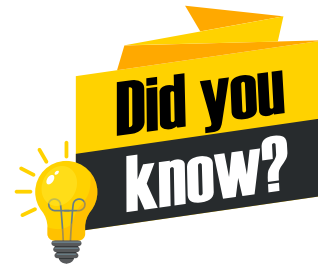
Nest site selection:

Freshwater turtles typically choose sandy or loose soil for nesting, in open areas with minimal vegetation cover. The nesting site is often located close to the waters edge, however some species may travel up to 50 metres from the waters edge.



Nest excavation and egg deposition:

The female will use her hind legs to dig a hole (known as the nest chamber) and will deposit her eggs into the chamber. The female will then use her hind legs to fill in the nest with loose dirt and will compact the soil on top using the force of her body. Nesting may take between 2 to 3 hours to complete. Clutch size varies among species, with females generally laying between 10 - 25 eggs.



Northern long-necked turtles create their nests underwater at the end of the wet season in northern Australia. Embryonic development remains arrested until floodwaters recede in the dry season and the ground dries.

Egg incubation and hatchling emergence:

The eggs will incubate in the nest chamber (underground) for 2 to 3 months (depending on the species). Incubation in some species can be up to 12 months. Hatchlings will begin to emerge from the nest in early autumn. Once emerged they will make their way back to the waterbody.



Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 1

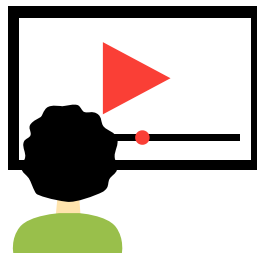
(1A) Watch the following video from the MidCoast Council. The video provides an overview of nest site selection and general characteristics of freshwater turtle nests.

Link to video: [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL3uMzcJiWQ>] (Copy and paste into browser).

(1B) Complete the Video Reflection worksheet.



Discuss



Video



Reflect

ACTIVITY 2

(2A) Watch the following video which shows a female turtle constructing a nest and depositing eggs.

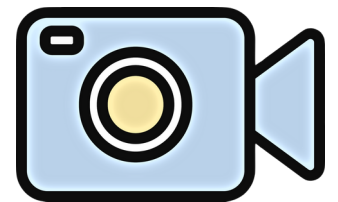
Link to video: [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTYvFR7jVNE>] (Copy and paste into browser).

(2B) Complete the Video Reflection worksheet.

Video Reflection

Three things I learnt while watching

3



Two questions I have from the video

2



One fact I found most interesting

1



ACTIVITY 3

(3A) In groups research an Australian freshwater turtle species.

(3B) Search for information using various forms of literature (i.e. articles, books, or printouts).

(3C) Collate information relating to reproduction, including nesting habitat, time of year and clutch size in the provided worksheet.

(3D) Create a diorama representing turtle nesting. Include elements like the turtle, nesting site, eggs, and the surrounding habitat.

(3E) Create small information cards or labels to accompany your diorama. Each card should include key facts about the turtle species including nesting behaviour and habitat.



Freshwater Turtle Nesting

Fill in the information below about your freshwater turtle species.

Freshwater turtle common name:

Scientific name:

Where does the species nest?

When does the species nest?

How many eggs does a female typically lay?

When do hatchlings emerge from the nest?

