



Term 4, Lesson 1

Freshwater Turtle Nesting

Learning Objectives:

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



Photo credit: Dr. James Van Dyke

Freshwater Turtle Nesting

Nesting season: Varies among species and regions. Generally it occurs during the warmer months, typically from September to March.

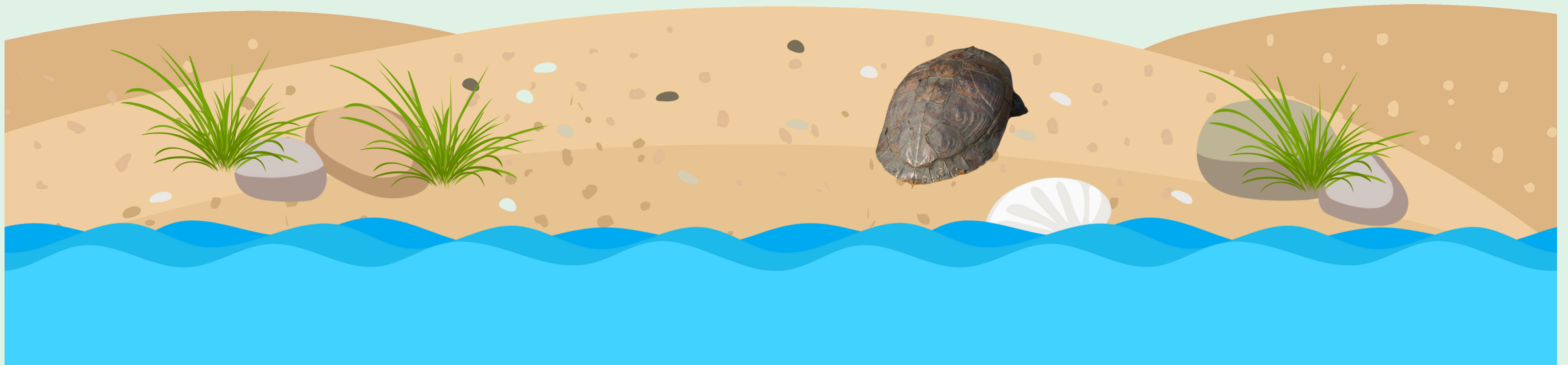
Environmental triggers for nesting:

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



Freshwater Turtle Nesting

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 water's edge, however some species may travel up to 50m to nest.



Freshwater Turtle Nesting

Nest excavation and egg deposition - the female uses her hind legs to dig a hole (known as the nest chamber) and will deposit her eggs into the chamber. She then uses her hind legs to fill in the nest and compacts the soil on top using the force of her body.

Nesting can take between 2 to 3hrs to complete. Clutch size varies among species, with females generally laying 10 - 25 eggs.



Freshwater Turtle Nesting

Egg incubation and hatchling emergence - the eggs will incubate in the nest chamber (underground) for 2 to 3 months (depending on the species). Hatchlings will begin to emerge from the nest in early autumn. Once emerged they make their way back to the waterbody.



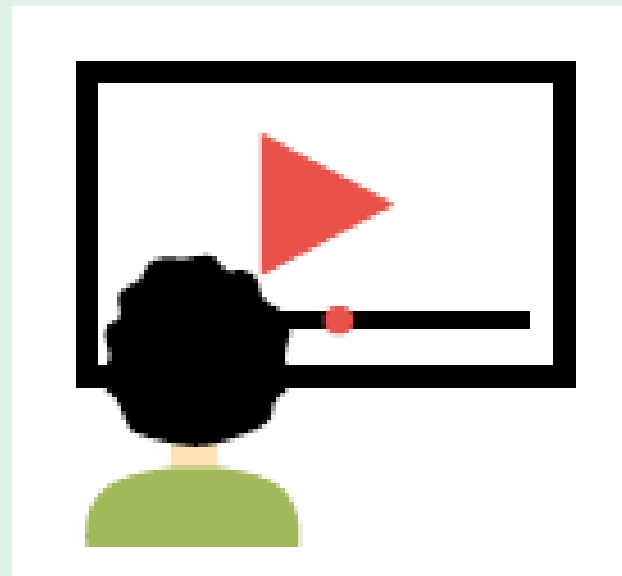
Classroom Activities

Activity 1 -

Classroom discussion about freshwater turtle nesting.

Video: Nest site selection (MidCoast Council)

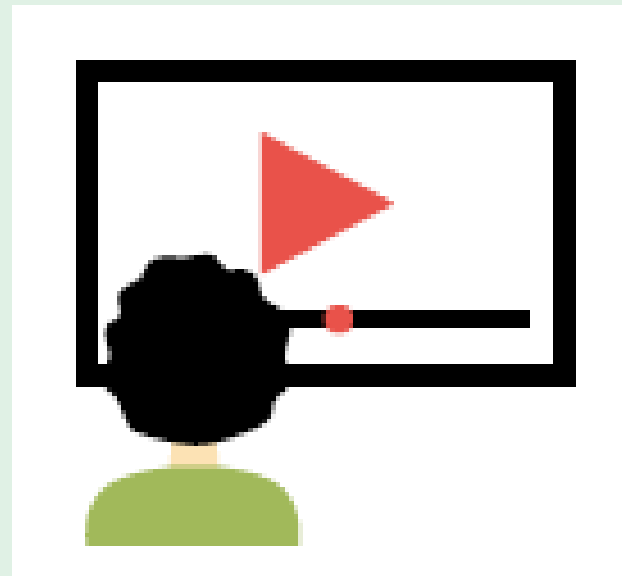
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL3uMzcJiWQ>



Classroom Activities

Activity 2 - Video: Nest construction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTYvFR7jVNE>



- Complete the Video Reflection Handout

Classroom Activities

Activity 3 -

In groups, select an Australian freshwater turtle species to research. Collate information relating to the species reproduction including nesting habitat, time of year and clutch size.



Classroom Activities

Activity 3 - Continued

Create a diorama representing turtle nesting.

Label your diorama with key facts about the turtle species

