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Activities

Sea Turtles' Magnetic Sense

Name: _____ Date: _____

Hatchling sea turtles make a mad dash across the beach to reach the sea before predators spot them. Then they swim thousands of miles trying to avoid fishing nets, oil spills, storms, and more predators. They use magnetic clues to find their way on this dangerous journey. You'll find out more in this Planet Diary activity.

Directions

- Go to Orientation and Navigation of Sea Turtles. Read the introduction, then click *Magnetic Orientation* below *Hatchling Offshore Migration* in the left margin. Read the information above the picture. Then answer Workspace questions 1 and 2.
- Continue reading below the picture to find out how scientists set up an experiment to test turtles' magnetic orientation. Look closely at the diagram. Click the forward-pointing arrow (on the bottom) to learn the results of the experiment. Then answer question 3.
- The swim from the Florida coast is the beginning of a much longer journey across the open sea. Click *Navigating the Atlantic* below *Hatchling Open-Sea Navigation* in the left menu. Read about the journey of hatchling loggerheads. Look closely at the map of their route. Answer question 4.
- Do sea turtles use Earth's magnetic fields to stay in the safety of the gyre? Click *Experimental Methods* in the left margin to see an experiment. Then click *Detection of Field Inclination* for the results. Answer question 5.
- Read this Planet Diary journal entry Fishing Hurts Loggerhead Turtles to learn more about dangers sea turtles face. Then answer the last question.

Workspace

1. How do sea turtle hatchlings know which way to go when they first enter the ocean?

2. How do the young sea turtles orient themselves once they're in deeper water?

3. Summarize the results of the magnetic compass experiment.

4. What is the North Atlantic gyre? Why is it important for turtles to stay within it?

5. How do sea turtles use Earth's magnetic fields to stay within the gyre?

6. How does commercial fishing hurt loggerhead turtles?

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