



Turtles in The Bahamas

The Bahamas is home to 5 of the world's 7 species of sea turtle: Green turtles, Loggerhead turtles, Hawksbill turtles, Leatherback turtles and Olive Ridley turtles. In an effort to conserve these species and protect them from undue harm, The Bahamas Government enacted new legislation regarding turtles in 2009. Sea turtles are under threat from illegal fishing, habitat loss and marine pollution.

How sea turtles help the environment:

- Turtles are the landscapers of the sea! When they feed on seagrass they are naturally trimming the seagrass blades, which keep it healthy and helps the seagrass to spread. Seagrass in turn provides food and shelter for many important species such as crawfish, grunts and conch.
- Turtle eggs act as fertilizer to dune systems! Not all turtle eggs hatch or survive. Those that don't provide valuable nutrients to coastal plants. This helps make the coastal dune system stronger, which in turn helps to protect our shorelines during storms. Without these nutrients erosion could increase.
- Turtles use multiple habitats in our environment including coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove wetlands and sandy beaches. If turtles went extinct, both marine and terrestrial ecosystems would be affected and so would our food sources and way of life!

These regulations apply to turtles in Bahamian waters:

- No person shall fish for, take or have in their possession sea turtles, turtle eggs, or any part of the turtle
- It is against the law to buy or sell sea turtles, turtle eggs, or any part of the turtle
- It is illegal to interfere with a sea turtle's nest
- It is illegal to export sea turtles, sea turtle eggs or sea turtle parts

* The *only* exception to these rules is for a person wishing to take and/or export sea turtles, sea turtle parts or sea turtle eggs for educational, scientific or research purposes. In which case you **must** apply for a permit and explain your reason for the collection before taking any sea turtle(s), turtle eggs or turtle parts.

CHAPTER 244, Section 19, FISHERIES RESOURCES (JURISDICTION AND CONSERVATION)

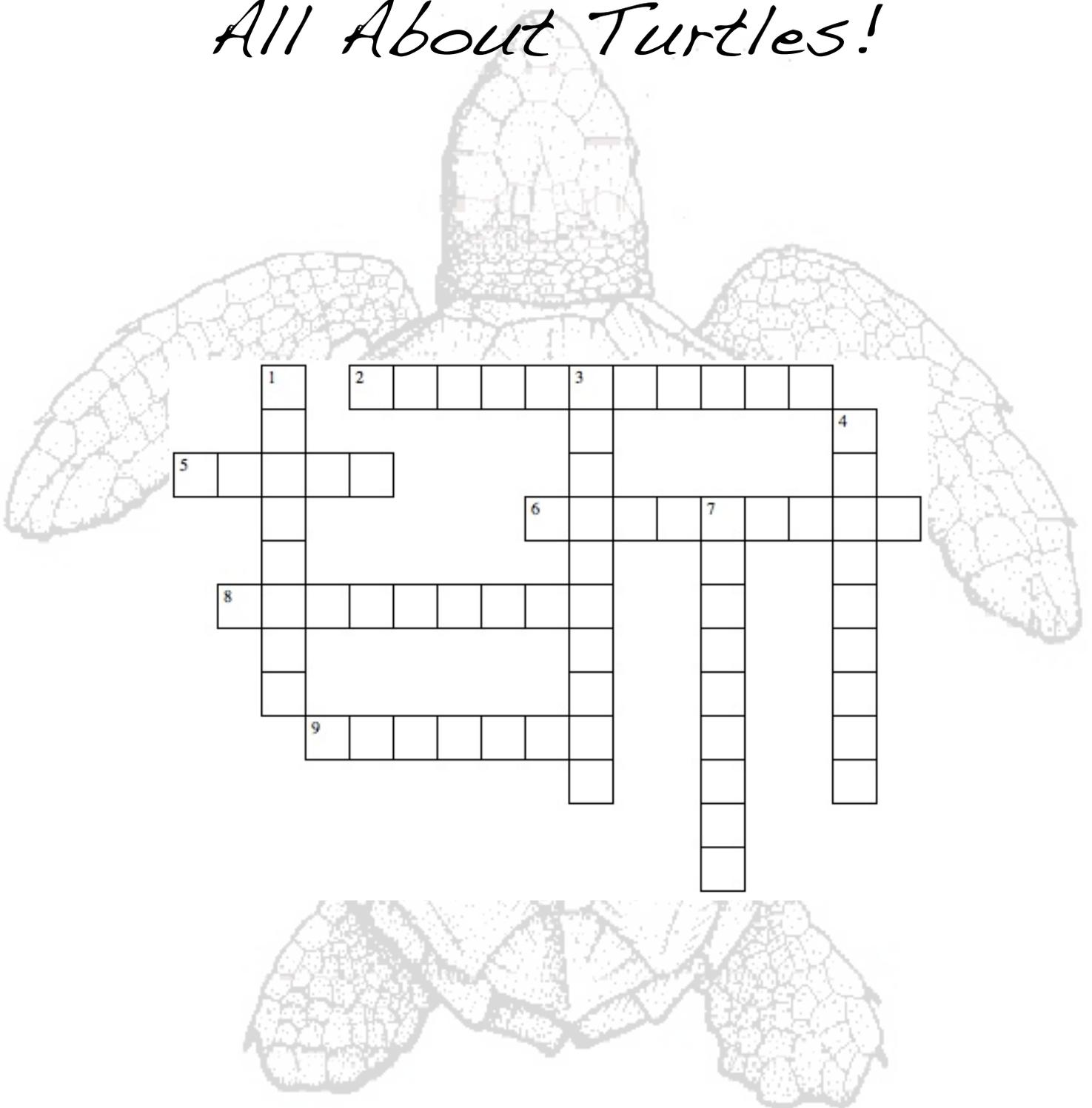
How you can help:

- Follow The Bahamas Fisheries Resources Regulations
- Participate in coastal cleanups and ensure that your trash ends up in the proper receptacle
- Remove obstacles such as beach toys and fill in holes on the beach when kids are done playing
- Turn off any ocean-facing lights at night during turtle nesting season (May - November)
- Tell others about the importance of sea turtles
- Report turtle nests to FRIENDS at 367-2721, info@friendsoftheenvironment.org



FRIENDS of the ENVIRONMENT
ABACO, BAHAMAS

All About Turtles!



Use these clues to fill in the puzzle:

ACROSS

- 2. Largest Turtle
- 5. Cartilaginous Predator
- 6. Sponge Eater; named for a bird
- 8. Baby Turtle
- 9. Animal Class, (e.g. not mammal)

DOWN

- 1. Undersea lawn; green turtle food source
- 3. Loggerhead Global Status
- 4. Dirty Threat
- 7. Brown floating seaweed; Hatchling Hideout