



WILD CLASSROOM

Conservation in the Classroom

Marine turtles: Why are they so cool and what can we do to protect them?

April 12, 2023

2 pm ET/11 am PT

Recommended grade levels: 4–8

Watch live on [Conservation in the Classroom](#)

View recording on the [Wild Classroom YouTube channel](#)



Ceci Fischer and Michael Jensen
WWF-Coral Triangle Program

Marine turtles are fascinating creatures that are an important part of coastal and marine ecosystems and are critical to the well-being of local communities. But despite their incredible beauty and importance, marine turtles face numerous threats in their natural habitat, such as entanglement in fishing nets, plastic pollution, and being hunted for their shells, which are transformed into accessories like bracelets.



In this presentation, marine turtle experts Ceci Fischer and Michael Jensen (WWF-Coral Triangle) will take you on a journey through the world of marine turtles, exploring their unique behaviors and delving into the challenges they face. Join us for this exciting and informative session; you'll be captivated by these incredible creatures and inspired to do your part in protecting them.

BELL RINGER WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Help prepare your learners by introducing the topic with these warm-up questions.

Identify

Six out of the seven species of marine turtle are considered at risk of extinction. Name three causes that have led them to become threatened.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Consider

Marine turtles can be found in various coastal and marine ecosystems, such as seagrass beds, coral reefs, and beaches. Why are they so important to...

- habitats?

- people?

Estimate

Marine turtles are highly migratory species that travel thousands of miles across oceans. The farthest a marine turtle has been recorded traveling was from Indonesia to Oregon. How many miles do you think that is?

- a. 2,000–5,000 miles
- b. 10,000–15,000 miles
- c. 22,000–28,000 miles



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Planning to watch the event live? Write your question(s) for the presenter here:

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

Use these resources to provide background information to your learners.

- Blog: [Machine Learning Powers a New Tool to Tackle the Illegal Tortoiseshell Trade](#)
- Video: [All About Sea Turtles](#)
- Web page: [Sea Turtle species page](#)
- Web page: [Infographic: Sea Turtles](#)
- Web page: [Bycatch](#)
- Web page: [Illegal Wildlife Trade](#)
- Web page: [ShellBank – The world's first global genetic database to trace and protect sea turtles from poaching](#)
- Web page: [Protecting turtles from the threat of bycatch](#)
- Web story: [7 ways you can help save the ocean](#)
- Web story: [What do sea turtles eat? Unfortunately, plastic bags](#)
- Web story: [How long do sea turtles live? And other sea turtle facts](#)



ACTIVITIES

Check out these lesson plans to supplement the content from the event.



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[Teaching Tools About Sea Turtles and Oceans](#)

Use the resource guide, classroom presentation, puzzle book, and cross-curricular lesson plans to help students learn more about marine turtles, their importance to marine ecosystems, and how to help protect them against the threats they face.

Grades 3–5

[Our Coastal Seas Episode and Discussion Guide](#)

Use the discussion guide with learners after viewing the “Our Coastal Seas” episode of the Netflix series *Our Planet* to continue the conversation about why marine turtle habitats such as seagrass beds, coral reefs, and mangroves are critical to ocean health.

Grades 5–12



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[WWF Together App](#)

Explore the marine turtle feature on the WWF Together app for a fun, interactive way to learn more about these animals and other wildlife species.

Grades: All

ASSESSMENTS

Conclude your lesson with these resources and fun assessment tools.

Kahoot! oceans course

- [All About Sea Turtles](#)
- [Importance of Oceans](#)
- [Threats to Oceans](#)
- [Plastic Pollution](#)



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Answer key for Quick Quiz (next page)

- 1) Marine turtles can be found in most of the world's oceans, except for cold polar seas. They tend to spend most of their time in shallow coastal waters.
- 2) True
- 3) Bycatch is the accidental capture of species in fishing nets.
- 4) Warming ocean temperatures are damaging marine turtle habitats, such as coral reefs, which are becoming bleached and losing the species that help keep them alive and healthy. Warming temperatures on land are also affecting marine turtles, as sand temperatures on the beaches where they lay their eggs can impact the gender of the hatchlings being born. Warmer sand is resulting in fewer males, which impacts turtle populations. The intensity and frequency of storms, as well as sea level rise, are also damaging nesting sites.
- 5) Marine turtle eggs and meat are a source of food and income for many people around the world. Some also kill turtles for medicine and religious ceremonies. Turtle shells are sold as decorative pieces, jewelry, and hair accessories.
- 6) Possible answers include working with communities to identify and implement alternative income methods (such as ecotourism, including tourism guidelines on the appropriate interaction with the animals); pushing for stronger enforcement to protect turtles from the illegal wildlife trade (e.g., beach patrols on the ground or legislation/conservation action plans at the national level); establishing marine protected areas to keep turtles safe when nesting, feeding, or migrating; and working with fisheries to use turtle-friendly fishing methods.
- 7) Possible answers include recycling, preventing pollution and reducing single-use plastics (e.g., straws, bags), being mindful to not waste energy/food/water, buying sustainable products and seafood, not disturbing nesting turtles on the beach, not buying products made out of tortoiseshell on vacation, slow boating/no motorboating in known turtle habitats, and advocating for marine turtles and other species by spreading the word to peers, family, and local officials.



WILD CLASSROOM

Marine turtles: Why are they so cool and what can we do to protect them?

Answer the following questions after watching the Conservation in the Classroom event.

Quick Quiz

1) Where do marine turtles live?

2) True or false: Marine turtles cannot breathe under water.

3) What is bycatch?

4) How is climate change impacting marine turtles?

5) Explain why marine turtles are threatened by the illegal wildlife trade (what are they being hunted for/what is it being used for?).



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6) Explain one solution scientists are currently working on to help protect marine turtles.

7) What can you do in your own life to help marine turtles and their habitats?



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