

# GREEN SEA TURTLE

## *Natal Homing Activity – Beginner*

Sea turtles return to the same beach they were born on when they reproduce. Scientists call this **natal homing**.

Some green sea turtles migrate more than 1,500 miles across the open ocean to reach their natal beach. To travel that far in a car, you would need to drive nearly 25 hours nonstop. Unlike us, green sea turtles make these long trips without a map. Instead, it's like they have a compass in their head.

In this challenge, you will work in groups of 2-3 and pretend you are green sea turtles returning to your natal beach. Answer the pre-activity questions on page 2, complete the activity, then answer the follow-up questions on page 3.

### **Materials:**

Large, open room (no stairs)  
Blindfold  
Stopwatch  
Pen/pencil (for expert version)

### **Instructions:**

1. Get in groups of 2-3. Take turns completing the instructions.
2. Select an area of the room that will be your natal beach.
3. Place a blindfold over your eyes.
4. Slowly and carefully, explore the room for 1 to 2 minutes. Imagine you are a sea turtle exploring the ocean.
5. Once the timer goes off, take 30 seconds to find your way back to your natal beach. Keep your blindfold on.
6. After 30 seconds, remove your blindfold to see where you ended up!
7. Complete the worksheets below to describe your experience.

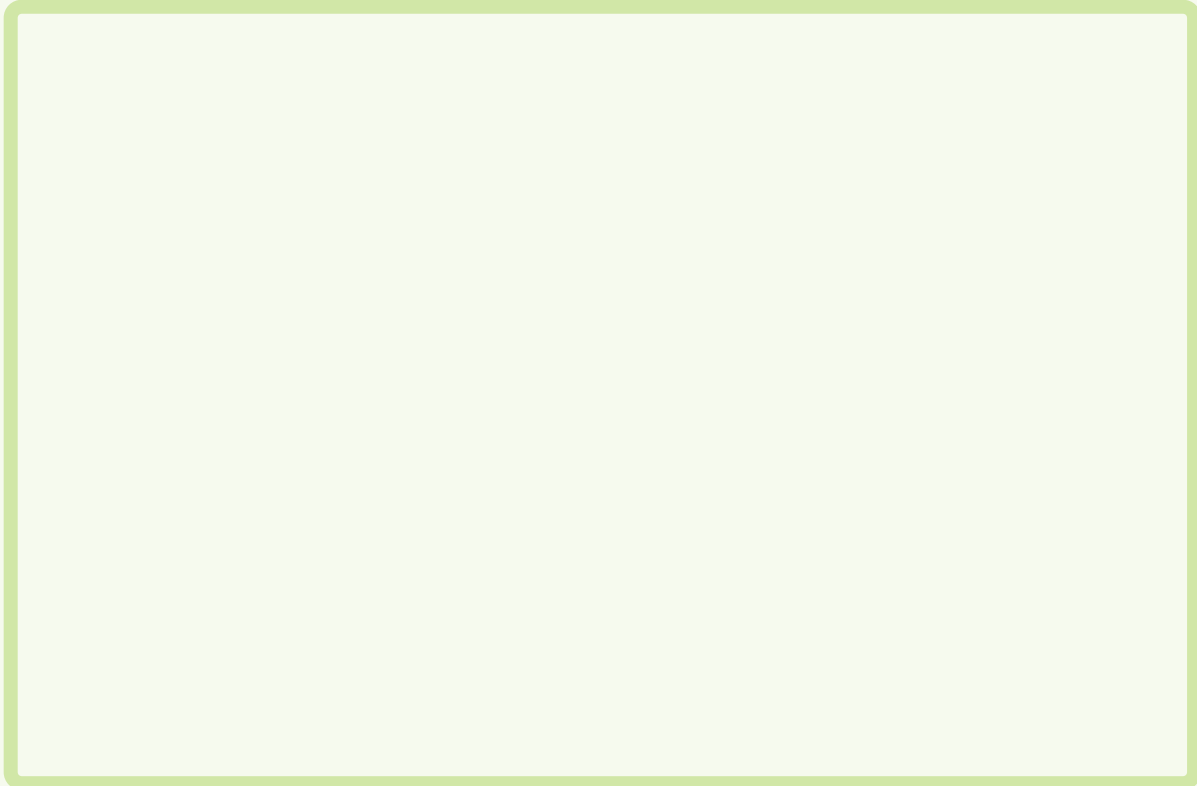
*\*Other group members must keep an eye on the exploring player to ensure they are safe.*

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## Pre-Activity Worksheet

### Draw Your Ideal Natal Beach

*Be sure to include the elements that make it a good beach for nesting.*



How do you think a turtle  
finds its natal beach?

- A. Smells in ocean currents
- B. Sight
- C. Using the Earth's magnetic field
- D. Something else:

How do you think you will  
find your natal beach?

- A. Smell
- B. Sight
- C. Sound
- D. Something else:

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## *Follo- Up Worksheet*

1. Did you succeed in finding your natal beach? Yes | No

2. What was the most challenging part of finding your natal beach?

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3. Did you use any strategies to help you return?

- ☐ Counting steps
- ☐ Remembering turns
- ☐ Listening to sounds
- ☐ Guessing
- ☐ Other:

4. How do sea turtles find their way back to natal beaches?

- ☐ Using their strong sense of smell
- ☐ Using echolocation
- ☐ Following moonlight
- ☐ Using ocean waves
- ☐ Other:

5. It's like sea turtles have a \_\_\_\_\_ in their head to help them sense directions.