

## Sea Turtles

On warm beaches around the world, female sea turtles leave the ocean to come on land and dig nests. Despite the fact that sea turtles spend most of their life in the ocean, the nests must remain dry. If a nest is **submerged**, the eggs will not hatch.

Sea turtles start out small, but overtime grow to become large, aquatic animals. Even small hatchlings can travel long distances riding on ocean currents to protected areas. Little is known about the period of time after they leave the nest, but before they return to coastal waters as juveniles. These mysterious early years are often referred to as the “lost years”.

Over its life, a sea turtle will face many threats. Nests are vulnerable to predators, waves, and people. Once the turtles hatch and crawl to the ocean, new challenges face them – both natural and man-made. Even when they reach adult size there are risks from boats, fishing lines, pollution, and plastic in the oceans. Because of this, sea turtle populations are the world are declining. Humans can play a large part in helping sea turtle populations recover.

1. What does the term **submerged** mean?
  - a. Covered with water
  - b. Dug up by animals
  - c. Becomes too hot
2. When talking about sea turtles, what is meant by the term “lost years”?
3. During what part of a sea turtle’s life does it face threats?
  - a. In the nest
  - b. As a hatchling
  - c. During the “lost years”
  - d. Throughout its lifetime
4. How are sea turtle populations doing around the world? What is causing this change?
5. What would be a more descriptive title for this story?

