



**Leather back Sea  
Turtles**

*(Dermochelys coriacea)*

# Overview

Leather back sea turtles are the largest of all living sea turtles. They are only behind three \_\_\_\_\_. Leather backs are also the last living species in the genus \_\_\_\_\_ and the only existent member of the family \_\_\_\_\_.

# Anatomy

- Most \_\_\_\_\_ body design (teardrop shape)
- Large pair of front flippers adapted for swimming in the \_\_\_\_\_ ocean
- Bony carapace, instead of scutes, has minuscule \_\_\_\_\_ embedded in its leathery skin

# Physiology

Leatherbacks have been viewed as unique for their ability to maintain high \_\_\_\_\_ using endothermy and they appear to take advantage of a high activity rate. The constant swimming creates \_\_\_\_\_-derived heat.

# Habitat/ Distribution

Leather backs can be primarily found in the open ocean, they are also the most widely distributed sea turtle. They have a \_\_\_\_\_ g range, reaching as far north as \_\_\_\_\_, and as far south as The Cape of Good Hope, in \_\_\_\_\_.

# Feeding

Adult Leatherback turtles subsist almost entirely on \_\_\_\_\_, though they may also feed on other \_\_\_\_\_-bodied organisms, such as tunicates and cephalopods. They will follow their jellyfish prey throughout the day, resulting in the turtles "preferring" \_\_\_\_\_ water in the day, and \_\_\_\_\_ water at night. This hunting strategy often places turtles in very \_\_\_\_\_ waters.

# Taxonomy

\_\_\_\_\_ is the only species in genus \_\_\_\_\_. The genus, in turn, contains the only extant member of the *Dermochelidea* family. The leatherback was classified as *Dermochelys coriacea* 1816. It's common name comes from the leathery texture and appearance of its carapace. Older names include "\_\_\_\_\_" and "\_\_\_\_\_".

# Evolution

Leatherback turtles have existed in some form since the first true sea turtles evolved over \_\_\_\_\_ years ago during the Cretaceous period. The Dermochelyids are close relatives of the family \_\_\_\_\_, which contains the other six extant sea turtle species.

# Source List

<http://reptilis.net/2010/08/02/t-u-r-t-l-e-power-part-3-leatherbacks-break-all-the-rules/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leatherback sea turtle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leatherback_sea_turtle)