



Meet the pawikan

Background reading for teachers

This reading gives you the background for each slide, with sources you can check.

Five species

The Philippines has five of the world's seven marine turtle species: green, hawksbill, olive ridley, leatherback and loggerhead. Green, hawksbill and olive ridley turtles nest on Philippine beaches. Leatherbacks, which nest in Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia, and loggerheads, which nest in Japan, only forage in Philippine waters.¹ The two species not found here are the flatback and Kemp's ridley.²

Diets

Adult green turtles are herbivores, eating mainly seagrass and algae. Hawksbills feed mainly on sponges, leatherbacks almost entirely on jellyfish, and loggerheads and olive ridleys are omnivores that eat crabs, molluscs, jellyfish and other animals.²

Red List status

The global Red List statuses shown are: hawksbill, Critically Endangered; olive ridley, loggerhead and leatherback, Vulnerable.² The green turtle was moved to Least Concern globally in October 2025 after decades of protection helped many populations recover, though some regional populations remain threatened.³ All five are protected in the Philippines under Republic Act 9147.¹

Sources

1. CMS IOSEA (2011). Philippines national report: marine turtle populations and habitats. iosea-turtles.cms.int
2. Maritime Review. Marine turtles and the Philippine forest turtle. maritimereview.ph
3. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Green turtle reassessment, October 2025. iucnredlist.org

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